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## The Laity

It has often been said that one of the strongest repercussions of the ecumenical movement in this century has been the awakening of the churches to the place of the laity in the total life of the Church. Or it might perhaps be said that the ecumenical movement itself has arisen from this awakening of the laity, that it has been one of the "non-theological factors" working for the unity of the Church in our day. Laymen are very often less sensitive than theologically trained clergy to the importance of traditional ecclesiastical or doctrinal issues, which in the past have provoked such division. In addition, they are perhaps more sensitive than the clergy to the crying challenge for unity represented by a day-to-day confrontation with the non-Christian world. In all recent studies on the ministry of the laity, it is emphasized that it is at the point of evangelism and mission that the laity has its major function. Evangelism must, by definition, be the task of those Christians who are most immediately involved in, and confronted with, the secular world, and it was utter foolishness that for so many centuries the churches considered evangelism as primarily the responsibility of a specialized clergy whose very specialization tended to isolate them from the rest of society.

In a way, the change has been so rapid and so profound that we cannot even imagine what church life was like a few decades ago, when all functions in the ministry of the Church were in principle and practice reserved to the clergy. It is even becoming impossible to understand clearly the differentiation

between clergy and laity. On the one hand, we have come to realize the etymological mistake which was made in conceiving the term "laity" as the opposite of "clergy", while it should normally refer to the whole people of God. On the other hand, the clergy itself has begun, here and there, to react against this specialization by which it has been identified. Young ministers in many parts of the world are emphasizing the impossibility for them to carry on a fruitful ministry if they continue to live as full-time employees of a church, and claim the right to live as "laymen", fully identified with, and involved in, secular society. This is particularly true of those concerned mostly with mission and evangelism in the areas of society which are most foreign to the Church.

The counterpart of this trend towards an identification of the clergy with the laity is the discovery that the laity as a whole needs some sort of theological training. A number of terms have been used for this, sometimes unwisely perhaps, such as training "lay theologians" or teaching "lay dogmatics". It is clear, in any case, that a much more systematic doctrinal education of the layman has characterized the life of the churches and especially of Christian youth organizations during this century. The development of methods of corporate Bible study has been typical of this effort to give basic theological training to the laity.

### *"Lay organizations"*

This brings us directly to the specific responsibility of the Student Christian Movements for training the laity. The SCMs have, since their beginning a century ago, been centred on the urgency of calling all Christians to become active evangelists, either as full-time ministers of the Church or in secular occupations. SCMs, as well as the YMCA and YWCA, from which they were so often formed, have been characterized by the term "lay organizations". It is a debatable point whether this is not a misuse of the word "lay", and there is considerable discussion today of the significance of the term used in this context. But it is clear that SCMs originally and still today (with the exception of some church-related Movements which



are a new development) have intentionally organized themselves so they are independent of any church control, both in the sense that they are interdenominationally open, and that, in their leadership and membership, they make no distinction between ordained clergy and other Christians.

This tendency can be explained in various ways, each one with its own validity. In the first place, and above all, SCMs adopted this "lay structure" with a view to preserving the character of the SCM as centred in the university, its field of mission, rather than in a particular church, somewhat remote from university life by its very nature and diversity. In this sense the lay character of the SCM proceeded from its evangelistic *raison d'être*. In the second place, this peculiar structure is to be understood in the perspective of the ecumenical nature of the SCM. When churches are so hopelessly divided and when one of their essential points of division is to be found precisely in their divergent doctrines of the ministry, it is normal for a movement which is conscious that its missionary calling implies ecumenical unity, to look for a structure in which no problem of validity of orders will arise. But, in the third place, and perhaps today even more than in the past, the lay character of the SCM reflects a deep concern to call to active service the ordinary member of the Church, and the first way to make lay people conscious of their responsibilities is to give them new opportunities to assume these responsibilities in the life of the Church, which, during their studies, will mean in the life of the SCM.

### *Federation leadership training courses*

We should mention here the most important trend in Federation life since 1945: the growing importance of leadership training courses, which have become the most successful kind of Federation meeting. Requests are coming from all national Movements, from the young ones of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and even older Movements in the West, for such leadership training projects. This is apparently a trend, not only in the Federation, but in all Christian youth organizations. One of the reasons for this new program is, of course, the need

of young SCMs for trained leadership. But there is a second and more important reason: the need to train lay leaders for the life of the Church in general. While the programs of our Federation leadership training courses include several sections which refer particularly to university questions, they are not in any sense designed for the technical training of SCM secretaries. On the contrary, they are conceived in the perspective of the whole life of the Church with its many problems and tasks, and aim especially to give to those students who participate the elementary "lay theological training" which they will need when the time comes for them to assume personal responsibility in a particular church.

### *Student pastors*

This "lay character" of the SCM is of considerable importance, and that is why the present development of a new pattern of Christian student work through student chaplaincies or pastorates has created so much discussion and uncertainty in the Federation. It is indeed amazing to see how fast churches in all parts of the world are training pastors especially for work with students. This is probably the result of the many years during which SCMs have emphasized the need for a special ministry for students, both because of their special problems, and, even more, of their strategic importance for the future of the Church. At long last the churches have heard our call. Some even contend that they hear it louder than it was ever sounded! In any case, today the eagerness of churches to appoint new student pastors not only helps to strengthen the total Christian work in the university; it also creates many problems and difficulties, for reasons which correspond in a negative sense to those given above for the SCMs maintaining a "lay basis". In the first place, student pastors, because they are not always wisely recruited, are not always congenial to the university world and do not always know how to address themselves to students. The key to this problem is obviously in close cooperation between churches and SCMs in the recruitment and training of student pastors. In the second place, student pastors, dependent upon a denominational church, very often



tend, or sometimes are even instructed by church authorities, to establish separate denominational student societies. There is, in principle, nothing to prevent students who are members of a particular church from gathering together to receive from that church, through a student pastor, such ministries as doctrinal education and the sacramental life. But it too often happens that these student societies do not complement the work of the SCM, but substitute for it separate denominational groups, thus representing a serious backward step in the development of ecumenical student work. Fortunately it seems that a solution is gradually being worked out empirically, through which there is satisfactory cooperation between the SCM and these denominational societies, which limit themselves to specifically denominational functions, "doing separately only those things which cannot be done together" in the SCM.

Finally, student pastors sometimes become an alibi for students not taking any personal responsibility in the SCM program. Why should students, who already have so much to do in their studies, who have no advanced theological training, undertake a task of evangelism, or the leadership of a study program, or the organization of a conference, when there is immediately available, and what is more, with a salary for the job, a nice student pastor who has had professional training? And it may be true, indeed it is very often true, that all these important functions will be better performed by the student pastor than they would be by "lay students". But it is also true that at the same time a great deal may be lost in the training of competent and effective lay leaders and workers for the Church. All the arguments that student pastors, because of their technical skill, can train lay leaders better, do not invalidate the simple fact, proved by experience, that the only way to become a leader is by leading. No-one learns theoretically how to take responsibility. There is no better school for leadership than the hard one of practical experience, with its successes, and perhaps even more, with its mistakes. Here again, this is no conclusive argument against student pastors, but only an indication of a point at which extreme care must be shown. The problem is not very different here from that in parish life. If, in an ordinary parish, the minister

is willing to take upon himself all the Christian responsibilities which the shyness or laziness of the members of his congregation put upon him, it will not be long before his church returns to the "dark ages of clericalism" in which the whole life of the Church (with the exception of some administrative and financial responsibilities) was in the hands of the clergy, when Church and clergy were really identified. It is a primary duty of the parish minister, and of the student pastor as well, to know how to refuse responsibilities and how to give them to his congregation, even if this means a few more mistakes and a little less efficiency. In this case again, the solution lies in the adequate training of student pastors.

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A good deal more could be said about the place of the laity in the SCM and the function of the training of the laity which falls upon it. We hope that this issue of *The Student World* will help to give our readers, and especially those who hold positions of responsibility in the SCM or in a church, to see the complexities of the problem, the relativity of the distinction between clergy and laity, and the impact of social changes upon the structure of the Church (though not upon its doctrine). We hope, above all, that it will serve as a reminder to all those concerned, to all our Christian readers, of the responsibility which lies on them as lay people, as members of the household of God.

PH. M.



# Laymen, Churchmen in the World

## Starting Point for Reflections on the Laity

LOUIS RUMPF

The question is one of those which arouse most interest today throughout the Christian world. The most disconcerting thing is the sight of the Roman Church itself, indeed the Roman Church especially, giving so much attention to this subject. For those who had got no further than the assertion of Pius X in his Encyclical *Vehementer*: "In the pastoral body alone reside the right and the authority necessary to promote and direct all the members towards the objective of the whole society. As for the multitude, its only right is to let itself be led and to be even docile to follow its pastors"; for those who remembered the remark of Edouard le Roy: "The only part of the simple faithful is that of the sheep of Candlemas; we bless them and we shear them"<sup>1</sup>; lastly, for those who were in the habit of regarding the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers as specifically Protestant, it is a great surprise to see the growth of Catholic Action, and the efforts made by the theologians to make explicit a doctrine such as that of the royal priesthood and to draw from it all the consequences compatible with Roman doctrine<sup>2</sup>.

When, on the other hand, we consider the importance in the ecumenical movement of thought about the mission of the laity, it seems to be of capital importance to get clear both the vocabulary and the realities which are involved in this research. Have we the same notions and the same preoccupations when we approach this subject? That is the first question to get clear.

Among recent publications by Roman Catholic authors the great work of Father Congar: *Jalons pour une théologie du*

<sup>1</sup> *Dogme et critique*, 1907, p. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> See the works of Father PAUL DABIN, S.J., *Le sacerdoce royal des fidèles dans les livres saints* (1941) and *Le sacerdoce royal des fidèles dans la tradition ancienne et moderne* (1950).

*laïcat*<sup>1</sup>, is particularly worth examining, and we shall take our basic definitions from it. He starts from the following observation: the layman has been defined on the one hand in relation to the cleric, on the other in relation to the monk. In the first place he is looked at from the standpoint of function or competence — the layman is the man who has not received Holy Orders and the powers which they confer; in the second place he is considered from the standpoint of condition of life — the layman is the man who sanctifies himself in the world. It follows that a consideration of the laity will be concerned with his position, on the one hand, in the Church, and, on the other, in the human community.

We shall take this second aspect first in this article and shall give most of our attention to it, dealing with the other more briefly at the end. Indeed, the consideration of the function of the laity in the Church differs enormously according to the doctrine of the ministry to which one ascribes, and one must expect the confessional positions to diverge considerably in this field. There is not the same divergence if we consider the problems relating to the laity in the world. It is this point then that the studies of the ecumenical conferences have chiefly stressed, from Oxford 1937<sup>2</sup> to Evanston 1954<sup>3</sup>. The working paper prepared for this recent study defined laymen as "those who earn their living by secular work or as housewives at home". Later it was suggested that "lay ministry" should mean the whole Church inasmuch as it is turned towards the world and taking part in the ministry which Christ accomplished therein. But this idea, though theologically full of possibilities, could not replace the first, which has the advantage of clearly indicating a category of believers: those who are not set apart for the full-time exercise of an ecclesiastical function, but who continue to perform the professional tasks common to believers and unbelievers.

It is obvious that this characterization of the laity does not quite correspond with that of a Congar, because it does not

<sup>1</sup> *Editions du Cerf*; coll. *Unam Sanctam* 23, Paris 1953.

<sup>2</sup> See especially *The Church and its Function in Society*, by J. H. OLDHAM and W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT.

<sup>3</sup> Section VI: "The Laity — The Christian in his Vocation".



refer to the monastic state in order to define the laity. It could not be otherwise since many of the churches which compose the World Council have abolished monasticism. Yet, although this difference is not negligible, one can see that the same problem is set for the churches whether Protestant or Catholic: to show that the position of Christians living in the world is not for all that "profane", foreign to the realm of faith, but that on the contrary they have a mission to fulfil related to their own situation.

This is how Father Congar for his part expresses this idea: laymen also exercise holy functions. At no time must we entertain any idea of them which would contradict this membership of the people of God to which the very etymology of the word bears witness<sup>1</sup>. Laymen are called to the same destiny as clergy and monks — that is, to the enjoyment of our inheritance as sons of God — but their condition is to pursue and obtain this inheritance without ceasing to engage in the movements of this world, in the realities of the first creation, in the delays, the stages and the methods of history. Laymen are called to do the work of God in this world, not only in the sense that for better or worse, against wind and tide, they must achieve in the world what monks do in the cloister; nor in the sense that having to do the works and achieve the form of holiness pertaining to the religious life, they should *in addition* do the work of this world which religious do not have to do. Laymen are in this world as Christians to do the work of God *in the particular way that it should be done in and through the work of the world*<sup>2</sup>.

The agreement of this passage with certain themes dear to the Reformers cannot be too strongly emphasized. Without doubt the Catholic theologian once again insists on maintaining the grounds for the monastic vocation and even a certain admittedly relative hierarchy between the different Christian conditions of life: "The relation of the laity to the unique final purpose is perhaps less immediate, and certainly less exclusive, than that of clergy and monks."<sup>3</sup> With the Reformers there is

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 38. (The italiques are in the text.)

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

certainly the idea of diversity of vocations, but not of inequality, and that because their definitions are not in terms of finality, in relation to a supreme Good, but essentially in relation to Him who is the source of it, for all concerned. Hence the polemical consequences drawn therefrom by Luther and Calvin as the counterpart of their positive teaching on vocation, the lay state and work <sup>1</sup>.

This rehabilitation of work is doubtless far from being without ambiguity, and the sons of the Reformation are far from having interpreted and rethought it in an authentically evangelical way, bearing in mind the problems raised by the evolution of society. Sometimes they have fallen into the trap of an exaggerated glorification of work, against which Karl Barth gives us a perspicacious warning <sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, if these different revivals which have shaken Protestantism have contributed greatly towards making laymen active in the Church and in missionary work, they have also

<sup>1</sup> Cf. KARL HOLL, *Die Geschichte des Wortes Beruf* (Ges. Aufs. III, 189 ff); EMIL BRUNNER, *Das Gebot und die Ordmenen*, pp. 182-190, 369-425, have shed much light on the Reformers' contribution in this field. Let us quote here simply this from Luther: "If I carry out and do the work of my calling so that I know it pleases God; then it is his Divine command. If I am thus certain that it pleases God, then it is not mine but God's work. Then I do it in obedience to God and do what pleases God, and not what pleases me, and I do it with a will and with all my heart. Therefore this is the true work, which proceeds from faith in obedience and pleases God." (*Weimarer Ausgabe* 16: 471.)

And this from Calvin: "...the Lord enjoins every one of us, in all the action of life, to have respect to our own calling. ...in all our cares, toils, annoyances, and other burdens, it will be no small alleviation to know that all these are under the superintendence of God. The magistrate will more willingly perform his office, and the father of a family confine himself to his proper sphere. Every one in his particular mode of life will, without repining, suffer its inconveniences, cares, uneasiness and anxiety, persuaded that God has laid on the burden. This, too, will afford admirable consolation, that in following your proper calling, no work will be so mean and sordid as not to have a splendour and value in the eyes of God." (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III, x, 6.)

<sup>2</sup> "It was indeed a great hour when Luther wanted to attribute with growing determination and one-sidedness the dignity of the service of God to the work done on the soil, in the workshop and in the training of children, instead of to the works of the monastic life. But in those days and later, more especially on the Protestant side, have we not done rather too much in this matter, as also in the over-estimation of the married in comparison with the single state? How far have we the Word of God behind us and for us in doing so?" (*Kirchliche Dogmatic* III/4, 540-541. Cf. 596.)



often ignored their temporal engagements and the problems implied therein. This pietistic tendency today calls for a corrective, which indeed a Revivalist like Christopher Blumhardt called for himself a century ago when he said : "A man must be converted twice : once from the natural man to the spiritual man, once from the spiritual man to the natural man !" Many feel sharply today the need for this "second conversion" ; without losing anything of the theology of grace and of the rebirth of which they are tributaries, they try to discern its repercussions in the order of nature, and therefore they subscribe to these words from the Evanston report on the laity :

We must understand anew the implications of the fact that we are all baptized, that, as Christ came to minister, so must all Christians become ministers of His saving purpose according to the particular gift of the Spirit which each has received, as messengers of the hope revealed in Christ. Therefore in daily living and work the laity are not mere fragments of the Church who are scattered about in the world and who come together again for worship, instruction and specifically Christian fellowship on Sundays. They are the Church's representatives, no matter where they are. It is the laity who draw together work and worship ; it is they who manifest in word and action the Lordship of Christ over that world which claims so much of their time and energy and labour. This, and not some new order or organization, is the ministry of the laity. They are called to it because they belong to the Church, although many do not know that they are thus called <sup>1</sup>.

In this extract the accent is on the fact that the Church has its place not only in worship but in the world. More clearly still, Dr. Walz, formerly of the World Council of Churches, has expressed it in this way : "The 'gathered community' which is so often considered an essential characteristic of the Church is basically an eschatological anticipation. The manner in which Christ is present which is typical for the age between the resurrection and the parousia is His presence in the diaspora,

<sup>1</sup> "The Laity — the Christian in his Vocation", *The Evanston Report*, 1955, p. 161.

the dispersion of the Church. 'Ye are the salt of the earth' (Matt. 5 : 13) — without dispersion no savour."<sup>1</sup>

#### POEPLE OF GOD AND ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

We must now ask the fundamental question to which our last quotation leads us. Is such a conception of the ministry of the laity really faithful to biblical evidence ?

The question may first be considered from a formal point of view : what is the connection between the language which the theology of the laity uses today, and that of the New Testament ?

This connection cannot be identity : there is no exact equivalent in Bible vocabulary for the word layman. The term *λαϊκος* as noun or adjective only appears with the Fathers. On the other hand, the term *λαος* from which it derives has a place in biblical terminology, quite specific and privileged, whose import may be summarized as follows :

The etymological origin of *λαος* is not clear. At all events, it designates the people not in the sense of a political body (*δημος*, *populus*) nor in the sense of a tribal or national unit (*εθνος*, *gens*) but for the most part in the sense of multitude, people, man. The amorphous multiplicity of human beings first and foremost implied in this concept is determined by that to which it is opposed and related. Thus *laos* in relation to a country means the population, in relation to a prince his subjects, in relation to a military leader the army, in relation to a priest the worshippers. This capacity of the word for remaining open to definition from outside and above has made possible its remarkable use in the Septuagint, the pre-Christian Greek translation of the Old Testament. There it is used in relation of God and usually means the people of God *par excellence*, i.e. Israel, the people of Jahweh chosen out of "the peoples", membership of which is a privilege and carries with it a special obligation. It is in this sense that the word is used in the New Testament where, however, it takes on the meaning of the "new people of God" composed of

<sup>1</sup> H. H. WALZ, "Lay, theology of the laity, laymen's work" (a lexicographical study) in *The Ecumenical Review*, July 1954, pp. 469-75. This important article, and the quotation we give from it above in particular, gives the key to the title of the French edition of the bulletin of the World Council of Churches' Department on the Laity — *La communauté des disséminés*.



Jews and Gentiles. *Laikos* does not occur in the New Testament; if it did occur, however, it would logically have to mean "pertaining to the community chosen in Christ". It may be assumed that this idea is present as an undertone in the words λαος and λαικος wherever they occur in early Christian writings <sup>1</sup>.

To this it must be added that the passage of the New Testament which most insistently proclaims the creation of God's people as the fruit of His mercy (I Peter 2 : 10) is the one where we find the affirmation of the royal priesthood (βασιλειον ιερατευμα I Peter 2 : 5, 9) which authorizes us to define the essential functions of this people. What do we mean by this ?

The term ιερατευμα (βασιλειον) is also taken from the Septuagint, where indeed it only appears once, to translate somewhat freely the qualification of Israel as a kingdom of priests in Exodus 19 : 6. The interpreters of this text show one of three tendencies :

1. The first, generally of Catholic training, think that Israel is so described because she is governed by a king but represented and qualified by her priests. But the terminology of this passage (jahviste-eloiste and not sacerdotal) does not support this interpretation.

2. Others, of individualist inspiration, stress the plural : a people of priests (*kohanîm*), a people where each is a priest. But the whole story is here dominated by the collective idea of the holy nation (*am kadosch*). Moreover, the Septuagint has not retained the plural, but has adopted the collective expression ιερατευμα.

3. The most valuable interpretation appears then to be the one which understands that the people as a whole, as belonging to its king (Jahveh), has the office of a priest in the world, and acts as mediator and revelation.

In I Peter 2 : 5-9 two affirmations must be brought out :

1. The first is in line with what we have just read in Exodus. Here also the royal priesthood is the privilege of the Church as a whole. Doubtless the author is not preoccupied with

<sup>1</sup> WALZ, *op. cit.*, p. 470.

combating the absolutism of a hierarchy. In this connection it must be said that Protestant polemics have certainly made use of this text rather than followed it, when they have sought in it justifications which they could have more fairly found elsewhere in the New Testament. In any case we must guard against fitting the priesthood with which this text is concerned into the framework of an individual and private piety. Priests through Jesus Christ, through the fact that they "draw near to Him", the faithful are only priests in the world as living stones of a building in which they are bound to each other as they are bound to their Saviour.

But neither are there grounds for supposing that the cement of their unity should be a hierarchy, or that they should constitute a spiritual house in order that a priesthood be exercised among and over them, or that they should draw near to their Lord in the framework of a sacerdotal institution as within a temple. No! they are themselves an eschatological temple, in the same way that they are themselves the priesthood, the only one of whom the New Testament speaks explicitly with that of Jesus Christ. Indeed, this is new by comparison with the Old Testament, that henceforth the faithful through the blood of Jesus are heirs of the High Priest of Israel and have free access to the Holy Place, as says the Epistle to the Hebrews (especially 10 : 19). So Calvin justly writes of this passage to the Hebrews: "He made us a royal priesthood", although this expression as such is foreign to this epistle.

2. The function of the royal priesthood is, according to I Peter 2, to offer spiritual sacrifices (πνευματικας θυσιας). What does this involve? It is difficult to be precise. The adjective "spiritual" does not tell us much about the kind of sacrifices concerned. In this whole context it seems above all to emphasize the eschatological character of the Church, wrought by "the powers of the world to come", the Holy Spirit. Must we think especially of the offering of the Eucharist? But the word θυσια is never used for this in the New Testament; further, the context of I Peter 2, as of Exodus 6, has more the character of an ethical exhortation. The plural, moreover, rather suggests that it is not so much a special act as all the diverse acts of the Christian, all that believers do and are (cf. Romans 12 : 1-2 ;



Col. 3 : 17 ; Heb. 13 : 16). The Eucharist seems to us to be included in this totality, but the expression which sums up the global importance and the highest of the spiritual sacrifices of the new people must be sought in these words of I Peter 2 : 9 : "that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light". Everything leads up to this capital proclamation, everything culminates in this. It is in evangelization and witness that is to be found the function of the people of God.

To give the full meaning to our enquiry we should evoke other aspects of the biblical message, for example, that of the cosmic Kingship of Christ or of the relations between faith and the various states of believers in this world. However, what we have seen of the people of God and the royal priesthood allows us to say that contemporary theology should make use of these notions to call on the Church to be "present in the modern world", and to bring its anguish and its promises before the throne of grace, as the High Priest in Israel bore the names of the twelve tribes before the tabernacle.

#### MODES OF LAY ACTION

Without going in detail into the problems of the "lay ministry", let us examine three points which are closely connected with the definition itself.

1. Evangelism is not only the concern of laymen but the part they play will be confirmed, conditioned and coloured by their witness in the actual conditions of their daily lives.

The first part of this thesis would seem to be obvious : have we not seen the propagation of the Gospel entrusted to all God's people ? Was it not in the first place the work of the Apostles ? And consequently was it not in the following centuries the ministers who considered themselves their successors who took over their task of evangelizing ?

Now this last conclusion does not necessarily follow. The Catholic historian, Gustave Bardy, can even write : "The diocesan clergy have never been missionary in the course of the first four

or five centuries and did not have to be." <sup>1</sup> According to him it was the laity, or the priests at most, whom it behoved to be spokesmen of the Church among the unbelievers, much more than the bishops.

One could ask whether it ought not to be the same today, whether the pastoral task should not be limited essentially to the faithful, evangelization only being effective through laymen who share the language, the training, the mentality and the conditions of life of those to whom they are speaking.

The conclusion seems to go too far <sup>2</sup>. Evangelistic campaigns of the Billy Graham type show that preaching detached from all professional and social connections may have an immense influence, where accompanied, of course, by an awareness of the Christian community.

This having been said, it is certain that many churches are far from having exploited all the latent resources of their laity who are capable, if invited, of contributing a message directly related to the setting of their daily lives. Besides, the New Testament recognizes alongside the spoken witness, that which the believer may make through his way of living, of managing his possessions or renouncing them, of building up his family or his celibacy, of performing his work, or in his behaviour to his daily companions. In the extension of biblical indications, a personal and social ethic helping the laity in their concrete obedience is of great importance. This ethic must be thought out by working communities in which laymen and specialist theologians engage in a common study.

2. The framework in which this effort must be made could not be only a local one. Every church must be aware today of the fact that the purely territorial sociological entity of the parish is far from corresponding fully to the structure of modern society. This must be taken into account in seeking new methods. As members of the Reformed churches particularly, we must be careful not to be paralyzed by the fact that Calvin conceived

<sup>1</sup> G. BARDY and others, *Priests of Yesterday and Today*, Editions du Cerf, 1954, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> PIERRE MAURY in "Remarks on the subject of evangelism", *Review of Evangelism*, Nov.-Dec. 1954, pp. 406-13, saw in this a sort of inverted clericalism.



the ministry essentially in a localized form ("to every man his church") in reaction against the crying abuses of the clergy of the period<sup>1</sup>; we must also see that the suppression of the monastic orders by the Reformation may also have exaggerated the territorialism of our ecclesiastical structure, while the rise of the missionary societies and the World Federations (YMCA, WSCF) partly filled the void caused by the disappearance of the supralocal organisms of monastic type, which in their origin were essentially lay movements<sup>2</sup>.

3. The action of laymen must be careful to respect the relative autonomy of the field in which it is exercised.

One will remember, for example, the grievous obstruction put by the Church in the way of a Galilean, and in other fields than that of science one will take care not to let preoccupation with propaganda or ecclesiastical proselytism weigh unduly; in an educational movement or institution the Christian will take account of what collaboration with non-Christians requires of him; as a statesman he will not use his powers on behalf of a confessional imperialism, but only of the public good. One is glad to find in the works of Roman Catholic "*laïcologie*" such as Congar's<sup>3</sup>, a warning of the same kind, all the more necessary in the setting of a theology which identifies the Kingdom of God with the Church as an institution. If Rome came to the

<sup>1</sup> *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV, iii, 7.

<sup>2</sup> HANS URS VON BALTHASAR, S.J., in *Laïcat et plein apostolat* (1949) has well shown how all monastic orders up to the Dominicans were laymen. If religious were driven to seek the priesthood, it was only on account of their missionary work, and even in the case of Dominicans and Jesuits because culture was in a large measure the privilege of the clergy. "*Etaient 'clerici', tous ceux qui poursuivaient une formation intellectuelle.*" The author shows how serious it is that henceforth culture is removed from the guardianship of the Church, whereas theology itself remains the business of the clergy. He begs us to remember that Christian theology was founded primarily by laymen and he thinks that the laymen's ability in theology is yet to be tested.

<sup>3</sup> Father Congar goes so far as to make this second warning into a second definition of the layman, distinct from the first one which we have quoted: "The layman will be he for whom, in the very work which God has entrusted to him, the substance of things in themselves exists and is interesting." J. DANÉLOU, in *Dieu vivant*, No. 25, has some reservations about this attempt at a definition of lay which goes in the direction of secularism, but sees in it some part of truth. It is true that the way Congar sets about it confuses matters somewhat, but the pages (19-45) which he devotes to this aspect of lay service which he calls *laïcité* are none the less interesting and courageous.

point of recognizing the principle of civil tolerance — without at once adding the limitation “in certain circumstances”<sup>1</sup> — she would achieve a great step towards overcoming the old *cléricisme-laïcisme* conflict — *laïcisme* meaning in French the desire to exclude all influence of “religion” (not without some reason confused with the interference of the clergy) from social and scholastic life. We recognize that every church, not only the Pope’s, must be watchful lest the action of laymen be diverted from the level of witness to that of manoeuvre.

#### LAYMEN IN THE EDIFICATION OF THE CHURCH

We brought out at the beginning of this article that the theology of the laity of a Congar does not only bear on the position of laymen in the world — in contrast with the monk — but also on the position of laymen in ecclesiology, in relation to the hierarchical priesthood. From the beginning of Catholic Action this question has come up and has shown itself to be a delicate one. The answer given at first was the following: the lay apostolate was conceived as a “participation in the hierarchical apostolate” (Pius XI). This terminology is no longer used today and we speak rather of collaboration with the hierarchy. Thus we avoid any intrusion of laymen into the domain of authority; but on the other hand we raise the dignity of the priesthood which is proper to them; we underline that it is not by subordination to the ministerial priesthood that the faithful are priests, but by participation in Christ; their priesthood is a mystic reality; it is that with which Mary was invested; it is no reduced second-class priesthood, but that of the whole Church. “The Christian pride of the layman who is aware of it may often need to be enlightened; it cannot be reduced.” Thus speaks Father Henri de Lubac<sup>2</sup>. In the same way the *jalons* of Father Congar are entirely conditioned by a fundamental distinction between the order of the structure to which the hierarchy corresponds, and that of life to which belong the royal priesthood and the apostolate of the laity. Thus while

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the speech of Pius XII to the Italian jurists of December 1953, quoted by JOURNET in *L'Eglise du Verbe incarné*, Bk. I, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> *Méditation sur l'Eglise*, p. 113.



deploring that Catholic theology from the early Middle Ages in reaction against heretical currents should have developed unilaterally its doctrine of the Church starting with hierarchical powers rather than with the Mystical Body of Christ, while still trying to recover in every possible domain the meaning of the Church as composed of her members, the author still maintains a frontier between hierarchy which provides the structure and laity which completes the ecclesial mystery, a frontier which we could not allow. If indeed the laity cannot be considered as an appendix to the Church, at most necessary to its *bene esse* — a misunderstanding which Congar repudiates vigorously — if we want it to have “a much sharper awareness, not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church”, to use the expression of Pius XII, how should we fail to recognize the fundamental intention of the Reformers, according to whom the priesthood of believers should not be without some effect on the structure of the Church? Thus Calvin, restoring the principle of the election of the pastor by the community, and establishing alongside the pastors and doctors the elders and the deacons, brought a contribution to the problem of the laity whose importance one would like to see Catholic theologians more frankly recognize. Instead of that, a Congar unceasingly disfigures the ecclesiological conception of the Reformers in suggesting that for them the empirical churches on earth are only assemblies of human making, and the ministries therein exercised are only delegated by the community of the faithful<sup>1</sup>. Whereas the reality is very different. In restoring to the laity the right to participate in the choice and even in the consecration of ministers, the churches born of the Reformation do not mean to subordinate their ministers to their flocks, but on the contrary to call their flocks to recognize in their pastors ambassadors of God, bearing an authority of an apostolic nature. Moreover, we do not claim that the answers given by Luther or Calvin to the relation between the laity and the ministry are at every point satisfactory. We only observe that the works of Catholic historians themselves on Christian origins let some elements appear which favour certain Reformed theses. But

<sup>1</sup> *Méditation sur l'Eglise*, p. 113.

we believe that we must go further and criticize not only the Constantinian, medieval or modern evolution of the Church, but equally post-apostolic Christianity. Doubtless the appearance of the word "lay" in Christian language was not in itself an evil, if it had only kept the positive colouring of the word *laos* in the New Testament. On the other hand, the fact that it appears from the first in opposition to ministries designated by the words high priest, priest and levite in the writings of Clement, that is the first step; the next is when we find Hippolytus at the beginning of the third century distinguishing laymen from *ecclésiastiques*, as though the laymen were not the Church. So the Middle Ages is only developing a much earlier germ of disintegration, in calling priests clerks, that is to say, etymologically, those who have received their position in the Lord or those who are the inheritance of the Lord. And this clericalism has not stopped poisoning not only the language but the way of life even of the Reformed churches.

We should consequently like to formulate a wish, while rejoicing in the truly ecumenical attention given today to the function of the laity in the world, that we should not in so doing lose sight of their function in the edification of the Church; the two perspectives are linked together and one should not be ignored for the sake of the other. If the Evanston report has, not unreasonably, put all the accent on the laity in relation to daily work, we believe the problems raised by their participation in the liturgy and the work of the parish, the catechetical and homiletical ministry, the cure of souls and above all evangelism, to be equally important; we think also that the pastoral ministry and its preparation must be rethought in the light of the training to be given to laymen. It is not without hope indeed that we salute the converging signs of such a renewal in the most diverse sections of Christendom.

## **The Ministry of the Laity in the Missionary Outreach of the Church**

HANS-RUEDI WEBER

Last summer, at a course for missionaries at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland, Professor J. Spencer Trimingham challenged some eighty of them with the question, "Don't you know that you are dead?" Professor Trimingham is an outstanding expert on Mohammedanism, and has made a detailed enquiry into the reasons for the alarming expansion of Islam in West Africa. In doing so he not only arrived at a fresh understanding of the secret of the growth of Islam, but also of the secret of Christian mission work. And he formulated this understanding in this sharp challenge, this death sentence pronounced on the mission work of the past 150 years<sup>1</sup>.

We may or may not agree with Professor Trimingham (and the tragedy of that conference was that most of the missionaries present either did not hear the question or else did not take it seriously). But at any rate there is no doubt that the nature of mission work is being questioned today. The collapse of missions in China and the difficulties being experienced in Indonesia and India compel us to examine and criticize ourselves.

But quite apart from these external circumstances, a new light on the Church, derived from fresh study of the Bible, is forcing us to revise our conception of missions. And it is typical that the role of the laity is strongly emphasized in both this re-examination of our missionary task and in this new light on the Church.

<sup>1</sup> See J. SPENCER TRIMINGHAM, *The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa*, IMC Research Pamphlets No. 5, SCM Press, London, 1955.



## I

## A NEW LIGHT ON THE CHURCH

*The scattered community*

The Church is usually regarded far too exclusively from the aspect of a gathered flock. Our conception of the Church has been formed by pastors and theologians, whose work is carried on mainly in the gathered flock. It is, therefore, not surprising that they have laid such stress on the "gathered" aspect of the Church. But they usually overlook the fact that, during the time between Christ's ascension and His return, the Church lives and works mainly as a scattered community. When developing His plan of salvation, God sent Israel in the diaspora. He scattered His people in order to prepare the Roman world for the birth of Christ. (The whole mission work of the early Church, the whole work of Paul, would be unthinkable without the Jewish diaspora.) In the same way God has been scattering His Church in the world since Acts 7 until the present day. It is our task to form a Christian diaspora in the midst of the pagan world, in order to prepare this world for the second coming of Christ at the end of time <sup>1</sup>.

This is clear from the powerful similes which Christ applied to the Church: "Ye are the salt of the earth"; "Ye are the light of the world"; "The field is the world. The good seeds are the children of the kingdom." The Church's function as the salt of the earth can only be carried out by the laity. To avoid misunderstanding, it must be added that in speaking of the ministry of the laity we mean the ministry of the Church. The word "laity" comes from the word *laos* in the Bible, which means "the people of God". The laity are members of God's people, specifically, God's people present in the world. The Evanston report on the laity also says: "The phrase 'the

<sup>1</sup> This idea is developed by Bishop STEPHEN C. NEILL, in his book *The Unfinished Task*, which is to be published by the Edinburgh House Press, London, in the spring of 1957.

ministry of laity' expresses the privilege of the whole Church to share in Christ's ministry to the world." "Therefore, in daily living and work, the laity are not mere fragments of the Church who are scattered about in the world... they are the Church's representatives, no matter where they are. ...It is they who manifest in word and action the Lordship of Christ over that world, which claims so much of their time, energy and labour." <sup>1</sup>

"The organized Christian community, as represented by pastors, elders or council, must stop measuring the faithfulness towards the Church, and indeed the Christian faith of laymen, by the hours they spend on church premises or in religious organizations. In most cases, the vocation of the layman as a living member of the Church does not lie in the church building, the parish hall or the vestry, but rather in his office or workshop, in the working community or occupational organization, in his family and in his participation in the life of the nation and its smaller communities." <sup>2</sup>

In a certain sense one could therefore say: it is precisely when the laity are engaged in their "secular" occupations that they are working in the service of the Church. They are "full-time" Christians just as much as the pastor is. The usual distinction between the sacred and the secular disappears completely. Even if the laity go "outside the Church" (outside the church building or outside any church gathering), they still remain within the Church — within "the community of the dispersed", to quote the paradoxical definition of the Church by Melancthon <sup>3</sup>.

If the laity fulfil this function as the salt of the earth, they really form the vanguard of the Church in its evangelistic and missionary outreach. "If once it is recognized that laymen are the most natural and genuine representatives of the Church in the world, evangelism will not be a particular activity of the Church exercised by some specialists, but will be regarded as

<sup>1</sup> *Evanston Speaks*, pp. 104-105, SCM Press, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> *The Laity — the Christian in his Vocation*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1954, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> See H. H. WALZ, "The Nature of the Church" and "Adult Christianity", in *Laymen's Work*, No. 8 (spring 1955), World Council of Churches, Geneva, p. 20.

the normal result of the fact that everywhere in the world Christians live and work alongside other people."

### *The gathered community*

The above quotation from the ecumenical survey on *The Laity* continues: "The trained theologian, the pastor and missionary, instead of being regarded as *the* evangelist of the Church — a job for which he is in a particularly bad position — will then be the biblical and theological instructor of the evangelists, a job for which he is in a particularly good position."<sup>1</sup>

When the laity take their ministry in the world seriously, then the work done within the Church will regain its importance in accordance with the Bible. The anti-clericalism of certain lay movements and the clericalism of some churches are both caricatures of the true Church. Just as the word *laos* in the Bible means the whole people of God, so the word *kleros* is a biblical concept meaning the whole Church: the Church is God's *kleros*, His "heritage" and His "possession". The work of the clergy, like that of the laity, can only be defined in relation to the ministry of the Church as a whole. It is not the duty of the laity to help the pastor to carry out his pastoral work; it is the pastor's duty to equip the laity to carry out their work in the world. The work of the laity is not secondary to that of the pastor, but *vice versa*. The gathered community and the work within the Church must be regarded in the light of the scattered community and the work of the laity in the world, and must be shaped accordingly. We must not "missionize" the world into the Church; but the Church in its mission must go out into the world.

If the life of the older and younger churches is examined from this point of view, a great deal of the activity of the Church and of missions will be exposed as wasted effort and church-narcissism. If we judge the present work of pastors and missionaries according to these criteria, it will be evident that far-reaching reforms in the work of the Church are urgently needed.

<sup>1</sup> *The Laity — the Christian in his Vocation*, p. 49.



First of all, we must try to restore the biblical diversity of ministries within the Church. The present system of combining nearly all the ministries in the person of the pastor is not in accordance with the Bible, nor is the Western tendency to regard the pastoral ministry as necessarily a full-time, paid occupation, for which the study of theology is presupposed. If one reads the enquiry by Roland Allen on this subject<sup>1</sup>, one can only be amazed at how far we have strayed from the early Christian conception of the different ministries within the Church. Many of Allen's requirements on this point are fulfilled in the Orthodox churches, which have preserved a more unbroken tradition with the early Church than have the Western churches. The Orthodox village priests are chosen by the Christian congregation in accordance with the rules laid down by Paul (I Tim. 3 : 1-7 ; Titus 1 : 7-10) and their names proposed to the bishop, who ordains them after a short period of training. They have already proved their mettle in the actual school of life ; they know all about the life and the difficulties of the congregation which is entrusted to their care, and the congregation proposes them for ordination because it recognizes their capacity for spiritual leadership and pastoral care. It is, therefore, not surprising that, in spite of their priest's clothes, Orthodox village priests are often less prone to the danger of clericalism than Protestant pastors, who are estranged from "their" congregations through their study of theoretical, abstract theology, and who are supposed to combine in their person almost all the various spiritual gifts and ministries. Only if we return to the biblical norms for choosing the pastors and teachers of the Church, can the ministries within it be shaped in such a way that the laity are equipped for their ministry in the world. Only in this way can every congregation, even the smallest, be sure of receiving the necessary spiritual food through the Word and the Sacraments, and also the necessary spiritual care and instruction. (As a result of the ideas imported from the West concerning pastors and teachers, their selection, training and ordination, many con-

<sup>1</sup> ROLAND ALLEN, *The Case for Voluntary Clergy*, Eyre & Spottiswoodes, London, 1930.

gregations in the Asian and African churches are now deprived of Holy Communion, of spiritual care and of instruction.)

Another important change is needed in the Church's training of the laity for their ministry in the world ; this training cannot be carried out exclusively in the local congregations. The training of the laity on Sundays and weekdays in the local congregations must be supplemented by the work of regional centres, where the laity receive instruction in Bible courses, vocational questions or courses on current problems, and by conferences where they are equipped for their special function. Other regional centres, ashrams, etc. should provide opportunities for retreats at which the laity, far from the tension of daily life, can renew their strength for their struggle in the world.

In addition to training the laity for their ministry in the world, the gathered flock has another function, which might be described as eschatological. When it meets for divine worship, the congregation foreshadows the Communion of Saints, rendering praise to God on behalf of the world which is still scattered — that praise which the whole world will render to Him at the end of time. The gathered congregation is a sign of God's coming Kingdom and as such has an evangelistic impact.

## II

### A NEW LIGHT ON MISSIONS

#### *The evangelistic community*

Only if we recover that biblical rhythm between gathering to prepare ourselves and to worship God, and scattering to evangelize, can we recover our witness, so that the churches in East and West become evangelistic communities.

Peter exhorts the Christians scattered in Asia Minor to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" (I Peter 3 : 15). Non-Christians are surprised or irritated by the sign of the gathered congregation and by the behaviour of the Christians living

among them. These Christians obviously judge things by different standards from those around them. They have different dimensions and categories. They live by means of a spirit which is different from that of the world. That is why non-Christians ask: "What is the secret of your life?" And in reply the Christians give the reason for their faith and hope.

That is the original Christian mission. That is the way in which the early Church grew quite spontaneously in the Roman Empire. Paul and other missionaries gathered groups of Christians together everywhere, and trained them to grow, not as the result of evangelistic campaigns, by specialists appointed for the purpose, but spontaneously, because all the members answered the surprised questions of non-believers in their daily contact with them.

What a difference there is between this spontaneous growth and our modern approach to evangelism and mission! One must read Roland Allen's account of his investigations on the missionary approach in order to realize the full significance of the rupture between modern missionary methods and those of the early Church<sup>1</sup>. Despite the objections which may with some justification be raised to Roland Allen's books, his main thesis is perfectly true. It is, in fact, constantly strengthened by the latest developments in the missionary situation and in the science of missions<sup>2</sup>: it is, therefore, very important that the Department for Missionary Studies of the International Missionary Council and World Council of Churches is at present concentrating on "the life and growth of the younger churches". There is hope that we may soon arrive at a truer picture of the churches which have sprung up as the result of modern missionary work. It is an unfortunate fact that many of them, like most of the old churches in the West, are already beginning to suffer from a sort of "hardening of the arteries", which prevents spontaneous evangelism by all church members. This

<sup>1</sup> ROLAND ALLEN, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*, first edition 1912, second revised edition 1927, World Dominion Press, London.

*The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It*, first edition 1927, second edition 1949, World Dominion Press, London.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to Trimmingham's study, see DONALD A. MCGAVRAN, *The Bridges of God*, World Dominion Press, London, 1955.



"hardening of the arteries" is the greatest impediment to missions in the present day. The greatest missionary task of our time, therefore, lies in rightly diagnosing the reasons for the sterility of many of the "younger" churches and in helping them towards renewal. For what the world needs is not more missionaries nor greater missionary activity; it needs evangelistic churches.

### *The fraternal aid of missions*

Was Trimmingham's view an absolute death sentence on professional missionaries and their activities in the missionary situation of today? Or has the "mission", in the technical sense of the word, still a role to play?

As long as the Church and the world exist, the "mission" (in the technical sense) will also exist; for the mission is part of the innermost nature of the Church, of all churches, including the "younger" churches in Asia and Africa. The mission will, therefore, tend more and more to be characterized by a two-way traffic, and will gradually cease to be equated with Western expansion in Asia and Africa. Missions will go on. But their traditional form and attitude is doomed.

Nothing but a confession of guilt can open the way to the new form of missions. We have to confess, in the words of Trimmingham, that "it is primarily the nature of the Western missions which has led to the atrophy of the evangelistic impulse, and there is little they can do to remedy the situation"<sup>1</sup>. The way to the right attitude is a clear understanding of the fact that the key to the present missionary situation is not missionaries and mission activities, but evangelistic churches, which maintain the right rhythm between being "gathered and dispersed", and which bring the Christian message to the world through the spontaneous witness of the laity.

The mission can only render fraternal aid. Since the non-Christians who come to believe through our witness to Christ are God's sons, our attitude to them must be fraternal, not paternal.

<sup>1</sup> TRIMMINGHAM, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

In what does this fraternal aid consist, if we examine mission work in regard to the ministry of the laity ?

*Help in training the gathered congregation*

In mission work today too much attention is still concentrated on big mission activities, and too little on the training of the laity. We train evangelists, instead of helping to build up evangelistic congregations. The working of the Holy Spirit in the younger churches is overshadowed by our imposing theological colleges, mission hospitals, experiments in rural reconstruction and mission campaigns. Nevertheless, that invisible renewal through the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of individuals and groups is the real evangelizing element. Only if something is changed in the lives of the ordinary Christians living in the world, will the people around them be surprised and begin to ask questions.<sup>1</sup>

In training the congregations for spontaneous evangelism, much help can be given to churches in Asia and Africa by those European churches which have been awakened by the theological renewal and by church struggles. But the training of missionaries must not be confined to mission colleges and universities, which are often still living in the nineteenth century, and which use the intellectual jargon of the West. They must all do part of their training in a centre like *Kerk en Wereld* in Holland, at one of the Evangelical Academies in Germany or at some other centre of church renewal. Of course, lay training centres of this kind cannot be exported indiscriminately to other churches and countries. But many voices from Asia and Africa convince us that similar approaches to the training of the laity for their ministry in the world are urgently needed in Asia and Africa today. The greatest progress in this direction has been made in India, and every missionary should take note of the work done there<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See ROLAND ALLEN's pamphlet, *Mission Activities Considered in Relation to the Manifestation of the Spirit*, World Dominion Press, London.

<sup>2</sup> WILFRED SCOPES, *Training of Voluntary Workers*, National Christian Council, Lucknow Publishing House, Lucknow, India, 1955.

R. D. PAUL, "The Ministry of the Laity in Urban Areas", *National Christian Council Review* of India, March-April 1956, and other articles in this magazine.

In addition to our assistance in the training of the laity in the churches in Asia and Africa, we must assist these churches by helping Asian and African students in the West. In a few years these students will occupy the most important positions in Asian and African society. If we help them, while they are studying in the West, to become responsible laymen and laywomen, we shall be doing a promising form of mission work which should be regarded as a priority in our mission planning and budget. Hitherto this work among Asian and African students has been regarded far too exclusively as the work of the Student Christian Movement or of individual missionary candidates or retired missionaries. The persons really competent to do this work, the responsible laity in the West, who try to be Christians in their professions in the secular world, have not yet been drawn into this mission work. The mission leaders and the Student Christian Movements should, therefore, cooperate with the best lay institutes and lay movements in the West, in order to bring Asian and African students in contact with responsible laymen in the West who are working in various professions. A doctor who is endeavouring to do his work here as a Christian is the most suitable person to help an Asian medical student to recognize his future work in Asia as a Christian vocation. And a lawyer, who interprets the law here as a Christian, can open the eyes of African students of law to the great mission task awaiting them in their professional work in Africa.

*Helping the scattered Christian community to act as "leaven"*

We have still to ask to what extent one church can help another in "leavening" the world. We shall not discuss here whether and how professional pioneer missionaries can fulfil this function in non-Christian countries. We shall confine ourselves to the question of to what extent lay people from overseas can contribute to the ministry of the laity in the world, outside their own cultural pattern. This question is often discussed at the present time in student circles, as well as in missionary and ecumenical ones. A survey of the decisions reached and the



work achieved is therefore appropriate here, together with a critical appraisal.

a) *An entirely new type of missionary activity*

At the last conference of the International Missionary Council (Willingen, 1952), Canon M. A. C. Warren gave an excellent talk on "The Christian Mission and the Cross", in which he spoke of "an entirely new type of missionary activity to be developed alongside the traditional modes". He then went on to speak of the work of Christian scientists, Christian trade union leaders and experts in cooperative organizations who ought to go to Asia and Africa in order to bear witness to Christ through their secular occupations <sup>1</sup>.

This appeal was taken up at Willingen itself by the discussion group on "Missionary Vocation and Training", which produced, as one of its findings, the following: "We believe that God is calling the Church to express its mission not only through foreign missionaries sent by the boards, but also through an increasing flow of Christian lay men and women who go out across the world in business, industry and government, and who do so with a deep conviction that God calls to them to witness for Him in all of life. The churches should be alive to the strategic importance of the spread of the Gospel by such lay people. The IMC is requested to explore ways whereby the churches can prepare and advise such lay people, linking them to the churches and foreign missionary societies in the areas to which they go." <sup>2</sup>

These topics have also been discussed repeatedly in the ecumenical youth organizations: the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches, the World's Student Christian Federation, and the World's YMCA and YWCA.

The same questions were discussed at Evanston in Section Four on "Christians in the Struggle for World Community", and the following resolution was drawn up: "We appeal to

<sup>1</sup> NORMAN GOODALL, *Missions Under the Cross*, Edinburgh House Press, London, 1953, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

the churches to bid their members recognize their political responsibilities, and also to ask Christian technicians and administrators to find a vocation in the service of United Nations agencies engaged in meeting the needs of economically and technically under-developed countries, thus bringing a Christian temper of love and understanding to bear upon the immensely difficult task of mutual assistance in the encounter of different cultures."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, a discussion on these questions was held at the last meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches at Davos in 1955. The Bishop of Chichester proposed that the World Council should send out an appeal to young Christians to place their lives in the service of the churches and people in countries of rapid social change. These questions raised at Davos are now being examined by the World Council.

In his talk on "Literacy as Evangelism", given at the Buck Hill Falls Conference in 1950, Dr. Frank C. Laubach described the service of Western laymen and laywomen in the great national and international help-projects as one of the three great doors which are open for evangelizing the world<sup>2</sup>. This appeal was made soon after the first world war, especially in connection with the World Service Exhibition, and in 1931 Sir Kenneth G. Grubb raised all these questions in an article on "The Need for Non-Professional Missionaries"<sup>3</sup>.

The prophetic Roland Allen had also expressed these ideas in 1929 in a little pamphlet published privately<sup>4</sup>. In it he discussed the disadvantages of being a professional missionary. He then appealed to people with a missionary vocation to go overseas as non-professional missionaries. "They should go into government service, into the offices of the great trading houses, into the farming community, into the society of the great cities and towns of non-Christian lands with this deliberate purpose — to show that it is possible for a man, or a woman,

<sup>1</sup> *Evanston Speaks*, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> F. C. LAUBACH, *Literacy as Evangelism*, Mohican Press, New York, 1950.

<sup>3</sup> K. G. GRUBB, "The Need for Non-Professional Missionaries", in *World Dominion*, January, 1931.

<sup>4</sup> ROLAND ALLEN, *Non-Professional Missionaries*, Amenbury, Beaconsfield, Bucks., 1929. The quotations which follow are on pp. 21 f and 29.

to be in the fullest sense 'in' that life and yet to be a missionary, to prove to the foreign community and to the native people amongst whom they dwell, that it is possible, and so to leaven the whole lump." "No government can prevent a man doing his work in Christ and for Christ, nor hinder him from answering the question which inevitably arises, 'Why is your life so different from that of other men?'" "The missionary work of the non-professional missionary is essentially to live his daily life in Christ, and therefore with a difference, and to be able to explain, or at least to state, the reason and cause of the difference to men who see it. His preaching is essentially private conversation, and has at the back of it facts, facts of a life which explain and illustrate and enforce his words." "It is such missionary work... that the world needs today. Everybody, Christian and pagan alike, respects such work; and, when it is so done, men wonder, and enquire into the secret of a life which they instinctively admire and covet for themselves... unless, indeed, seeing that it would reform their own lives, they dread and hate it, because they do not desire to be reformed. In either case it works."

#### b) *Laymen working abroad*

Roland Allen not only wrote in this way: during the last years of his life he also worked as a non-professional missionary in East Africa. He did the kind of work which many people have done before and since, whether or not they are mentioned in the history of missions.

The question itself is, therefore, an old one, and the discussion about it is not so new either. But since the appeal made at Willingen some new attempts have been made to create better opportunities for such lay service overseas and to train and strengthen the laity for this service.

In this connection the experiences of some members of the Australian SCM working in the Graduate Employment Scheme in Indonesia are significant<sup>1</sup>. Training is available at the courses for non-professional missionaries, organized by the Basle

<sup>1</sup> For more details apply to Jim Webb of the NUAS Graduate Employment Scheme, NUAS, Union House, University of Melbourne, Carlton N. 3, Victoria, Australia. See also *Federation News Sheet*, 4 and 5, 1955.



Mission<sup>1</sup>, by the Overseas Service in Great Britain<sup>2</sup> and by the conferences of the *Commissie Kerk Overzee* in Holland<sup>3</sup>. The work of the Association of the London Missionary Society is also important<sup>4</sup>.

In the Roman Catholic Church too much stress is laid upon this service of lay missionaries. In Catholic terminology, missionaries who have not been ordained (such as mission doctors or teachers employed by congregations and churches in mission and church institutions) are also placed in the category of lay missionaries. We think it better to classify these professional missionaries who have not been ordained together with the ordained professional missionaries, and in this connection to speak only of those laymen and laywomen who are engaged in "secular" occupations.

In 1950 an International Secretariat for Missions through the Laity was founded, and is now known as The Catholic Union for Inter-Racial Cooperation, with an international headquarters in Milan<sup>5</sup>. This secretariat works as an exchange-centre for the thought and experience of the Catholic organizations which deal with the question of lay missionaries' service. These organizations include, for instance, the Medical Missionaries' Institute at Würzburg, *Ad Lucem* in France, the *Auxiliaires féminines internationales* in Belgium, the movement *De Grail*, and the RICCI group in Canada<sup>6</sup>.

### c) *Critical appraisal*

We have dwelt at some length on the missionary service of lay people working overseas because this question is on the

<sup>1</sup> See R. KURTZ, "The Lay Worker as a New Type of Missionary", *International Review of Missions*, 1953, pp. 308-17.

<sup>2</sup> H. B. T. HOLLAND, "An Experiment in Lay Responsibility", *International Review of Missions*, April 1955, pp. 187-92.

<sup>3</sup> C. L. VAN DOORN, *Thuis in de Tropen*, pamphlet published by the *Commissie Kerk Overzee*, Carnegieplein 9, The Hague, 1955.

<sup>4</sup> *The Place of Associates in the World Mission of the Church*, pamphlet published by the London Missionary Society, 1954.

<sup>5</sup> *Union catholique de coopération interraciale*, Via Kramer 5, Milan. Secretary: Dr. Marcello Candia.

<sup>6</sup> See *Annuaire 1955, Union catholique de coopération interraciale*, published by the international secretariat in Milan. This also gives a good Roman Catholic bibliography on the subject.

minds of many laymen and many missionary councils at the present time, and because, as far as I know, the relevant publications, appeals and beginning work have not been considered before as a whole. But in conclusion an attempt may be made to see this new work in its true dimensions.

(i) Emphasis must be laid on the fact that, in the present missionary situation, the main work of evangelism must be done by the laity in the Asian and African churches themselves — not only as regards traditional mission work but also this “entirely new type of missionary activity”; these lay men and women know best the world in which they live and must try to leaven it. The most lay people from overseas can do is to render fraternal aid. We should therefore be extremely modest in speaking about this aid. It is significant that many leading personalities in the Asian and African churches show little understanding of, or interest in, this new type of missionary activity.

(ii) Just as important as the service of the lay people from the West working in Asia and Africa is the service of the Asian and African Christian students studying in Europe and America. The churches in Asia and Africa should draw the attention of young Christians going overseas to the fact that they must act as leaven in the secularized universities of the West. The same applies to Asian and African Christians working in state and trade who come to the West.

(iii) In countries where there are Christian churches, the greatest missionary service which can be rendered by the laity from overseas is to help the lay people of the country, through their own example, to realize their vocation, which is to act as leaven in their profession. A Roman Catholic statement is perfectly right in saying that the lay people from overseas must only regard themselves as helpers. “Their role is to bring to the laity of the countries where they go, the help they need to become aware of their function in the Church and in the world, and to make them quite capable of fulfilling it. They cannot be satisfied while they themselves alone are doing what is

expected of a lay Christian, but above all must seek to help the laity of the country to do it themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

(iv) The difficulties of missionary service of this kind are usually greatly under-estimated. Even within their own cultural pattern, it is extremely difficult for the laity to stand the tension between being-in-the-world but not-being-of-the-world. In addition they have to stand the tension of being foreigners. In colonies and in countries where there is racial discrimination, the barriers of mistrust and injustice make it almost impossible for lay people to render such missionary service. But even in places where these walls do not exist, there are plenty of other obstacles : the materialism which prevails in the milieu of those from overseas, the moral disintegration, the difference in climate and intellectual background which is often so nerve-racking, etc. It is therefore not sufficient to train lay people who are going overseas ; it is even more important to give them fraternal support. Professor Trimingham rightly says : “The recruiting of Christians directly into government and commercial services is beginning to be recognized as an important function of missionary societies today. But it does not go far enough. What is needed is their incorporation into the brotherhood of a Third Order, and their linking with the local church rather than with expatriate congregations.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Annuaire 1955, Union catholique de coopération interraciale*, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> TRIMINGHAM, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.



## Clergy and Laity

CHARLES D. KEAN

What are the relationships between the clergyman and layman in the mid-twentieth century Protestant Church? To ask this question is to raise problems of both theory and practice. The answer must be found in a rethinking of a theology of vocation.

Historic Protestantism represents a revolt against the two-level clerical character of the Roman Church. Perhaps this negative origin has something to do with the confused nature of the problem in the history of Protestantism, where the clergyman has, on the one hand, assumed an official clerical character which puts the layman in the shade and, on the other hand, has so often become a kind of executive secretary in charge of various kinds of administrative work.

In historic Protestantism, the distinctive role of the clergyman has been that of preacher-proclaimer and interpreter of the Word of God. His priestly character has not been lost sight of, particularly in Anglicanism, but the layman tends to think of his minister first as preacher, secondly as pastor, and thirdly as priest. This means that the problem of vocation for the average layman is at best confused, because his connection with the preacher is not on the level of parallel ministries but rather as hearer to speaker.

### *The issue for our day*

In our day when so many clergymen find themselves doing specialized jobs hardly distinguishable from what lay professionals are doing, and when some laymen are finding a real vocation in a kind of quasi-ministry, the issue left open at the Reformation is sharpened.

In a sense, this is a perennial issue which would apply with equal pertinence to any era in the Church's history, but it is

also true that the meaning of the question is defined by the particular situation in which we live today. Some people have drawn attention to the fact that the distinction between clergyman and layman appears to be breaking down, because a good many men in clerical orders are taking employment in business, education and government, while the Church at the same time is finding some opportunity for specialized lay ministries. This is only one side of the picture, however, if the American Protestant scene is taken into account. There is a contrary tendency to define church life by the clergy, and for the laymen to think of their church membership in terms of loyalty to particular clergymen.

The issue is further complicated by the fact that when statements are issued in the name of the Church, they are more often than not presented by bodies which show signs of predominantly clerical influence. There is a real attempt in much of American Protestantism, both on the level of the National Council of Churches and in the life of the constituent member denominations, to associate the laity with the clergy in statements of policy, but the result is not one hundred per cent convincing. One does not have to agree with the thinking and conclusions of the Pew Committee in its criticism of the National Council of Churches' statements on economic issues, to realize that there is a serious question as to the degree to which the laity may have a real voice on the higher policy levels of church life in some other sense than simply ratifying what clergymen have already done.

When we have said all this, we have only sketched one side of the problem. The clergyman obviously is necessary to the on-going life of the Church, while a Church without laity is inconceivable. The issue for our day is focused perhaps in the American scene by the fact that there has been an increasing number of mature men with considerable business or professional experience offering themselves for ordination in their late thirties or early forties, if not later. Without in any way questioning the vocation of any of these men as individuals, one cannot help but wonder whether the modern Protestant Church can effectively challenge the imagination and dedication of concerned laymen without turning them into clergymen.

The answer to the question of the relationship between the clergy and the laity will obviously differ in detail depending on the particular ecclesiastical traditions and cultural factors. This writer speaks as an Episcopalian, within the American tradition of the Anglican Communion, and as an urban American. Consequently, his views will be necessarily coloured by church life as he knows it and cannot pretend to be universal.

### *Straws in the wind*

The question of a dynamic lay vocation has received considerable attention in recent years in American Protestantism. Elton Trueblood, a well-known Quaker, wrote a little book a few years ago entitled *Your Other Vocation*, which was widely used in study groups in all the major non-Roman churches. Dr. Trueblood and others have also founded a movement on an interdenominational basis called the Order of Yokefellows, which seeks to provide some direction and guidance for concerned laymen without weakening the denominational and parochial loyalties by siphoning off their energies into one more large amorphous organization.

These comments on the work of Dr. Trueblood are perhaps straws in the wind. Most of the major denominations in America have standing commissions or departments on the subject of the layman. In such reports as this writer has seen, the underlying question is frankly faced — that the layman be truly challenged in the direction of dynamic participation, but he must be assigned more than responsibility for the temporalities of church life. Although this question has been more sharply raised than answered, there has been a growing concern about making the fund-raising aspect of laymen's work more basically evangelistic, rather than being a task of enlisting church members to subscribe to a budget.

When all is considered, however, we must face the fact that the relationship between the responsibilities of clergymen and laymen in the twentieth century American church constitutes an open question which some people are exploring. Almost everybody is dimly aware of this as an issue, but one to which no final answers have yet been given.



*The priesthood of all believers*

It may be helpful to suggest that a rethinking of the theological meaning of vocation in the light of classical Christian principles may provide the structure in which our answer is to be found. By vocation we suggest that every Christian has a "calling", that he is called of God to a particular ministry, whether in the secular world or in the organized Church. The official ministry of the pulpit and altar dramatizes in a quasi-sacramental way what must be true of the more general ministry of the church member serving in the world.

The cornerstone of our thinking is the great classic doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Some real recovery of an appreciation for this doctrine is evident today, but it is true that by and large it is misunderstood. The priesthood of all believers does not refer to the priestly character of every Christian, as if the Christian fellowship were simply a collection of individual priests who have organized themselves for various purposes.

The priesthood of all believers refers to the priestly character of the Church as a whole, from which individuals both clerical and lay derive a common priesthood. Christ's commission is to the apostolic band, not simply to eleven individual friends. St. Paul was commissioned by the Jerusalem Church, not simply by James and Peter asking in their individual capacities. The Pauline letters are written to the Church at Ephesus, Corinth or Rome. Obviously, the Church is made up of individuals, but basic New Testament teaching seems to suggest that the fellowship imparts something to the individual which the individual does not have by himself.

The Church as the Body of Christ, the extension in history of the Incarnation, the Fellowship of the Resurrection, the Spirit-filled Communion of Saints—the Church by any of these or other titles is a corporate body deriving its priestly character from our Lord and is sustained in its corporate nature by the Holy Spirit. This understanding is certainly underlined by the First Epistle of Peter, in which the Church is called "a royal priesthood, a holy nation". Such an understanding of the priestly character of the Church as a whole seems to

suggest that those in the ordained ministry derive their character from Christ through His Body the Church. They are not functionally connected to God and His purposes apart from the Church. (The ridiculous extents to which a theory of inherent priesthood can go is illustrated by the *episcopoi vagantes*, those quasi-Catholic clergy who have distributed "Church Order" during the past century and a half without reference to church fellowship.) As the specific priesthood of men is derived from the priestly character of the Body of Christ, it follows that the clergy symbolize and dramatize the priestly function of the Church as a whole and, by extension, the priestly responsibility of every Christian.

A recovery of a modern Protestant theology of vocation would lead to each person, regardless of his profession, seeing in his work a ministry which derives a priestly character from the priestly nature of the Body of Christ. Thus, what is done in the office, the factory and the field becomes the altar and pulpit in action, and what is done in the sanctuary becomes a sacramental dramatization of common life.

# The Free Churches and the Laity

W. M. S. WEST

"The time has come to make the ministry of the laity explicit, visible and active in the world." So reads the report of the section on the laity from Evanston. It is a statement with which the Free Churches heartily agree, for it is a policy which they have held both in theory and in practice from their beginnings. Anyone writing an article on this subject is, however, immediately brought face to face with two problems. First, that to speak of the place of the laity in the Free Churches immediately involves a discussion on the doctrine of the ministry, and secondly, that to speak as if all the Free Churches are completely unanimous on all points involving the laity is, of course, inaccurate.

Thus it must be said at once that a full exposition of the doctrine of the ministry is impossible within the scope of the present article, and also that the writer speaks as an individual, from the context of English Free Church life in general and from the point of view of a Baptist in particular.

## *A gift of the Holy Spirit*

We may take as our starting point a quotation from the Congregational Statement contained in the Lund volume on *The Nature of the Church*:

It is our fundamental principle that in all organization of the Church at every level, all authority is spiritual, or, as our fathers put it, ministerial, not legalistic, coercive and magisterial. Arising from this principle is the place ascribed to the laity in Congregational Churches. The Church is to be ruled by the Word of God, ministers are the accredited and ordained expositors of the Word, and we have always



insisted, where possible, upon a learned ministry. But the ultimate human authority in the Church is the whole fellowship wherein every member is to exercise his spiritual gifts and all are to learn from each ; while the minister is appointed normally to preach and administer the sacraments, any member of the fellowship may preach or administer the sacraments *if called upon by the Church to do so*.

A full understanding of this statement is essential for the appreciation of the position of the laity in the Free Churches. From a reading of the New Testament it is felt that the ministry was there regarded as the gift of the Holy Spirit. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord... But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (I Cor. 12 : 4, 5, 7. Cf. the whole of that chapter and also Ephesians 4 : 11f). That is to say that the ministry, varied in content, grew out of the gift of the Holy Spirit, the office grew out of the gift, not *vice versa*.

So it is then that Baptists and others feel that in the New Testament there is no distinction between "clergy" and "laity" which might be held to imply a difference of status and privilege — but only a difference of function and service. Every Christian is thus called to minister according to his "gift" in the service of Christ and His Church. This is one aspect of the principle of the priesthood of all believers. On the other hand, it must be appreciated that the Free Churches have a high conception of the office of the Christian minister (or pastor) and great care is always taken concerning the testing of a man's call and the training for the exercise of his gift.

### *Explicit in the world*

Turning now to examine how these conceptions have been, and are being, worked out in practice, we must recall first how much the Free Churches owe historically to the laity (so called). It was a layman, Thomas Helwys, who was the leader of the group of returned exiles which comprised the first Baptist church on English soil at Spitalfields in 1612, and indeed,

Dr. Whitley, the Baptist historian, writing of the period 1640 to 1660 says :

Baptists put in practice the priesthood of all believers and had no paid ministry released from the discipline of ordinary life. In the country, the typical minister was a thatcher, a farmer, a maltster, a cheese factor ; in the town the preacher had been during the week making shoes, pins, buttons, collars, hats, clothes, had been dyeing or upholstering or selling such wares ; here and there might be found a scrivener, a writing master, an apothecary, even a doctor.

In very truth at that time the ministry of the laity was explicit in the world. Examples, of course, can be multiplied many times from Free Church history, of laymen exercising their spiritual gifts in a myriad of ways in the world. Was not William Carey a shoemaker, while pastor of a Baptist church ?

But the question may fairly be asked as to the authority by which the farmer or shoemaker exercises his office in the congregation. The answer is that the authority is derived from the congregation which, guided by the Holy Spirit, calls him to have office over it. The preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacrament are acts of the Church and anyone duly commissioned by the congregation may perform these acts. John Smyth, the Baptist pioneer, puts the position clearly. "... the last definite determining sentence, is in the body of the Church whereto the eldership (ministry) is bound to yield. ... the Church may do any lawful act without the elders but the elders can do nothing without the approbation of the body or contrary to the body." As it was in the past so it is in the present. In Baptist and Congregational churches today a layman can be called to be in sole charge of a church and exercise all the functions of a minister, including the administration of the Sacraments. A layman is not debarred from any pulpit simply because he is a layman, and in fact the number of laymen preaching by invitation in the Baptist and Congregational pulpits each Sunday would probably run into several thousands. The ministry of the laity is indeed explicit in the world. But it is not only laymen who minister, but laywomen also. There is no distinction made between the sexes.

There are women ministers in both Congregational and Baptist churches, and there are women who week by week perform the duties of a lay preacher. The highest offices in the Congregational and Baptist denominations are open to the laity, both men and women. The Holy Spirit gives the gift and the office is filled by the person most fitted by the Holy Spirit to hold it.

### *The Methodists*

We have spoken thus far of the lack of distinction between the clergy and laity. Before we go on to examine the way in which the layman exercises his gifts in other directions, a word should be said regarding the Methodists. In view of the historical context in which they arose, their practice in the question before us has been somewhat different from that of the other Free Churches. It may generally be said that the principles are much the same. The power of ordination to the ministry rests in the hands of the church. The priesthood of all believers is accepted — but in practice it has worked out rather differently. The debt owed by Methodism to the layman is, of course, incalculable. This is true of the past as of the present. In its early days Methodism was very much of a lay movement, yet the distinction between the minister and the layman has been, and still is, sharper in Methodism than in the Baptist and Congregationalist denominations. It was only gradually during the nineteenth century that laymen were allowed to have a voice in the quarterly meetings, and not until 1878 was there lay representation at Conference. In 1894 a woman was elected by the Synod to Conference, and although she was allowed to stay, it was not for another decade and a half that the election of women to Conference was finally sanctioned.

Today in Methodism there can be no women ministers, and although through the well organized Methodist Lay Preachers Association, laymen render magnificent service Sunday by Sunday in the pulpits of city and village churches, they do not normally administer the Sacraments. And then, again, the presidency of the Methodist Conference is limited to a minister, with a layman as vice-president. But this difference between the Methodists and the others is limited to the lay preacher

and his function. All the Free Churches stand together in the use they try to make of the church member in the forefront of evangelism.

### *The church meeting*

The Baptists and the Congregationalists believe in the responsibility of each church member to exercise his or her gift in the activities within the church and notably in taking a full share in the deliberations of the church meeting. It is at the church meeting, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that all matters concerning the life of the church are decided. Although the minister usually presides and although the agenda has usually been discussed beforehand by the deacons, who are themselves lay men or women elected by the church meeting, the ultimate decision on all matters rests with the Holy-Spirit-directed congregation of laity in the church meeting. Here indeed is another, and it is believed, a scriptural and early Christian aspect of the exercise of the spiritual gifts given to each man. It is the church meeting which prayerfully calls a minister to the church, it is the church meeting which lovingly yet firmly exercises discipline within the church, it is the church meeting which discusses how the life of the members may together be built up in Christ and how the Evangel may best be proclaimed in local circumstances. It is indeed a ministry of the laity. Nor indeed should it be forgotten that the Methodists have their annual society meetings which it is the responsibility of each church member to attend, and at which reports of various organizations are given and elections take place for the leaders' meetings, the first stage up in the Methodist organization.

Space forbids more than a passing reference to the work carried out by the laity in various offices in the local church. Mention has been made of the deacons. They are men and women elected by the church members to serve as an "executive committee" to the church meeting. Their tasks are many and varied, some secretarial, some financial, some leadership of church organizations, and many are the lay men and women who in these ways render sanctified service to God "for the



perfection of the saints, the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ". No article on the laity in the Free Churches can be complete without reference to the vast work undertaken by the laity in Sunday school teaching. Among Baptists in Great Britain alone there are more than forty-four thousand people teaching regularly in the Sunday schools.

*Every member a missionary*

Yet when we have spoken of the layman in the pulpit and the layman in the Church it is the layman in the world upon which the emphasis is laid in the Evanston report. Here, as has been said, the Free Churches stand together in their emphasis upon the layman's responsibility to carry out missionary activity. As his varied gift may be, so must he exercise it in the context of his work. This has always been the theory and practice of the Free Churches. J. G. Oncken, the pioneer of the Baptist movement in modern times on the mainland of Europe, was once asked: "How many members have you in your churches?", and when he had given the number the questioner asked: "And how many missionaries?". "The same number", replied Oncken, "with us every member is a missionary." The Baptist Union Declaration of Principle contains the statement: "That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to Jesus Christ and to take part in the evangelization of the world." This, it is believed, has been the responsibility of every Christian since the earliest days, and there is many a reference in the writings of the early Church which bears witness to the impact made upon the pagan world by the life of the laity. Dr. Wheeler Robinson used sometimes to speak not only of the priesthood of all believers, but also the prophet-hood of all believers, as if to emphasize the need of speaking and living the Word of God before men. In different ways the Free Churches have sought to train their members for this work — with varying success. Perhaps where they have failed has been in that they have not put sufficient emphasis upon the Christian attitude towards the work which the Christian must do to earn his living. To such an emphasis the Evanston report rightly directs us.

*The task of the Free Churches*

Yet with all this, it cannot be said in all honesty that all is well with the practice of the ministry of the laity in the Free Churches. We have spoken about the work of lay preachers, but today there are not sufficient of them. We have spoken about the absolute responsibility of the church meeting, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for the affairs of the church, yet too often these meetings are poorly attended and become merely opportunities for "rubber stamping" decisions made by the minister and deacons. We have spoken about the evangelistic responsibilities of the layman, yet so often we have failed to train and encourage his undoubted zeal for the task. In fact, it sometimes seems to the present writer that the Free Churches must guard against betraying their trust of the ministry of the laity, just at the very time when other churches are coming to recognize the vital importance of that ministry. This must not be allowed to happen. As the Evanston report goes on to say: "The real battles of faith today are being fought in factories, shops, offices and farms, in political parties and government agencies, in countless homes, in the press, radio and television, in the relationship of nations." The layman is obviously in the front-line. It is for the Free Churches to draw upon the wealth of their experience in this matter and contribute it to the ecumenical discussion at both national and local level so that the layman and laywoman may be better equipped and more effective in the use of their spiritual "gifts" for the ministry of Christ and His Church.

# Pastor and Layman in the Church of Sweden

CARL OLOV HARTMAN

## *Influence of the Reformation*

In the Church of Sweden, as in so many others, the general Christian ministry was resurrected through the Reformation as the base and root of specific ministry. The Word of God and the Sacraments belong to the Church in general but, in order to ensure order, they are entrusted to special stewards who therefore preach and dispense the Sacraments under the appointment and in the service of the general Christian ministry.

This conception was all the more readily accepted in Sweden since, even in medieval times and from its very inception, the Church of Sweden had been obliged to recognize the co-responsibility of the laymen to an extent unparalleled elsewhere. In other countries kings and princes frequently shouldered the responsibility for introducing Christianity. In Sweden it was the people in their local assemblies who in each individual place took the decisive step. Elsewhere parish churches were built under the protection of *patroni* according to the letter of the canonical law. In Sweden there were no nobles who could become *patroni*; here there were only farmers who, as a group, became the *patronus* of their church with all the practical and financial control which this involved. This became one of the foundation stones of the autonomy of Swedish municipalities and led to the lasting and unique dominion of laymen in church affairs.

The Lutheran doctrine of vocation strengthened still further the layman's conviction that he belonged to a consecrated estate precisely by being a layman. True, the Reformation in Sweden did distinguish strictly between "spiritual and secular government", but this was not done in such a way that the preaching of God's Word delivered politics and economics over to some kind of *Eigengesetzlichkeit* — the Reformers definitely

let the authorities know the things which belonged to their peace — but this doctrine, by disarming the Church of all weapons but the Word, also protected it from all undue encroachments by the authorities. If Swedish tradition has neither then nor later been willing to acknowledge a state church in the sense of a sort of religious state department, neither has it ever considered cooperation with the state as anything strange or degrading. King, government and parliament, precisely through their regular political work, rendered Christian service ; purely secular politics were holy grounds — they lay within the pale of the Church.

### *Power of the clergy*

In practice, however, much of this took on a quite different aspect. Following the Reformation the cultural and social services previously rendered by the monasteries were to be performed by the authorities and church reeves of the individual parishes. It is, however, quite probable that a long time passed before there was as much concern for culture and the poor as there had been during the Middle Ages. The task of encompassing and leavening the entire community with the Word of God, the vast labour of enlightenment which was a necessary consequence of the fundamental principles of the Reformation, required perspicacity and effort of a type which, in a great many parts of the country, could only be expected of the clergy. Of great importance in this connection is the fact that in Sweden the reformed church took over the episcopacy of the medieval church, for the Swedish bishops very quickly rallied around the Reformation and were to a great extent for the Church of Sweden what the princes were for the Evangelical churches in Germany. The influence of the bishops and clergymen on all community activity was potent, since the church was the centre, not only of religious activity in the parishes, but also of innumerable secular affairs ; the clergy frequently became actual kings in their parishes. Stories are still told about pastors of the past century who wrote the minutes before the parish meeting was held ; they had no need to take into account more than one opinion.



*Pietism and the neo-evangelical revivals*

The pietism which gained a foothold in Sweden during the 1720's and which, towards the close of the century, set its stamp upon church activities in many parts of the country apparently wrought no great change in these conditions. The pastor remained sovereign in his parish in spiritual as well as worldly matters. He alone publicly preached the Word of God and no layman raised his voice during the communal worship except in the singing of hymns. But devotions in the home gained in importance, and it was also there that the pietistic meetings grew up. Conversations centred on the Bible and books of homilies produced influential spiritual advisers from among the laity, and in many parts of the country the laymen's influence became so powerful that they disciplined the clergy to the same degree that the clergy disciplined them. This was furthered by the pietists' method of utilizing what Luther called *jus judicandi*, the laymen's right to criticize the clergy's sermons — a distinction was made between "true teachers" and other divines, one which many pastors to this very day regard with fear and trembling.

About the middle of the last century the neo-evangelical revivals arose, demanding more active participation of the laymen. One of Sweden's most outstanding spiritual guides and preachers was a layman, and there grew up in his image a throng of lay preachers who, while serving the new movement and cooperating with the clergy, were to spread the Gospel without encroaching upon the sacerdotal stewardship of the priesthood. Much of this revival seceded from the Church of Sweden and formed non-conformist groups where the lay influence in both worship and practical matters was considerably greater. In the majority of other established Lutheran churches corresponding revivals have stayed within the bounds of the church. Inner Mission in Denmark and Norway is an example of this. In reply to the query as to why other paths were followed in Sweden, it must be said that a decisive reason was the tenacity with which the Church of Sweden clung to a community-ideal which through centuries had adjusted itself to the old dominant farm community. When new social classes

appeared and demanded participation in the making of decisions, they encountered opposition not only in the time-honoured existing community form but also in the church that had identified itself with the old system. Admittedly, similar tensions between old and new also developed on the Continent and in other Scandinavian countries, and as far as the industrial workers' relationship to the church is concerned, there must have existed greater conflicts and misunderstandings in Germany, for example, than in Sweden. But the preceding crisis which led to the liberation of the lower middle classes and which demanded a corresponding change in the religious field, was met by the Church of Sweden with a conservatism which aggravated the divergences until they became intolerable. This may be a substantial explanation of the prominence of the Free churches in Sweden, which is unparalleled elsewhere in Scandinavia.

At the turn of the century many considered the Church of Sweden doomed because it rested on an outworn communal system. On the one hand, it was exposed to the criticism of the Christian faith made in the name of scientific workers' movements. On the other, it was being abandoned by the religious groups which possessed the greatest vitality, for they maintained that it retained too little of the Christian faith, especially since it was contaminated through having too much in common with the state.

### *The Young Church Movement*

Under these conditions a new movement arose within the church, the so-called Young Church Movement. It had its roots in the Student Christian Movement where the prevailing uncertainty took the form of a keen intellectual ferment. A group of students and teachers at the University of Uppsala sought and found a synthesis in which the Church's spiritual stewardship of community and culture, realized through the centuries in the parish church, was merged with the current intellectual and social problems. As in the past, community and culture had been censured as well as blessed within the walls of the Church, so now they should accept the same Law and

the same Gospel and, within the Church, receive remission of their sins. It was no mere coincidence that these ideas found expression in a laymen's movement; it was inevitable. When in 1909 members of the Student Christian Association of Uppsala went out to preach the new church program, this so-called crusade was organized by a layman, headmaster of a peoples' high school, Manfred Björkquist, who later, still a layman, was appointed Bishop of Stockholm.

During the following years a multitude of laymens' organizations came into being. In 1911 the *Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrrelse* (the Church Board for Voluntary Work) was founded as an advisory board and work centre where new methods of work received mutual aid and inspiration. It is noteworthy that these organizations did not arise at some order from above, so to speak, but grew up through cooperation of clergy and laity. And later, when the lay organization, *Kyrkobröderna*, was formed, such concern was shown for laymen's initiative that a clause was put in the constitution banning active clergymen from becoming chairman, either of the organization as a whole or of any of the individual parish chapters. Through *Svenska Kyrkans Lekmannaskola* (Laymen's School of the Church of Sweden), one of the *Diakonistyrrelsen's* activities, laymen's possibilities for rendering qualified service have been greatly enhanced. Here training is given Sunday school teachers, scout masters, youth organization leaders and other such workers.

Nevertheless laymen's movements in Sweden have not been able to avoid entirely the tendency so frequently evidenced in similar organizations in other countries whereby, in the last instance, the clergy's influence becomes dominant. Within a few years many of the young laymen who founded the Young Church Movement were ordained ministers inspiring and leading laymen's movements in their various areas. This, however, is only a partial explanation. The real reason, here as elsewhere, should probably be sought in the fact that the clergyman is supposed to possess greater qualifications than anyone else for any conceivable kind of church activity, partly because he is trained in things theological, partly also because he has the time. In addition, many strange conceptions regarding the

priority of the various functions of a minister often play a fateful role.

### *Laymen in church government*

It is significant that this laymen's movement is assigned a place in the legal system of the church only through the *Diakonistyrelse*, which is appointed and is responsible to the church synod. Otherwise this laymen's influence is in no way exercising that voice of control which, according to the constitution of the church, is the laymen's prerogative in its government. One half of the one hundred members of the synod must be laymen. Of the other Scandinavian countries only Finland has anything corresponding to this synod; in Denmark and Norway questions which in Sweden are submitted to this body are entirely in the hands of the government. Like the Danish and Norwegian churches, the Church of Sweden lacks an executive body; the bishop is *primus inter pares* and each diocese is in fact a church within the Church and is governed by a chapter with six members of which two must, and three may, be laymen. The influence which the bishop and chapter can exert on the work in the individual parishes is very limited; the decentralizing tendency so characteristic of church life in the North is also felt here. The active bodies of the local church government are the vestry and the church commissioners, elected by popular vote in the same manner as any municipal officers. By virtue of his office the rector is chairman of the vestry, whereas the church commissioners select their own chairman by ballot. Thus the minister's influence is very limited because of the overwhelming majority of laymen whose authority rests upon ancient tradition. Unfortunately this laymen's influence is greatly narrowed by the fact that the vestry and church commissioners mainly handle financial matters. The regenerative activity within the church has taken place largely outside of and independent of the legal church authorities, and wherever these bodies have taken upon themselves actual responsibility for church activity within the parish, it has generally been the result of skilful and patient work on the part of the clergy. A salient reason for the secularization of



these parish authorities has been that they are often elected more according to the relative strength of the political parties than to the candidates' interests in the church or insight in religious questions.

Of course, this "politicalization" of the parish governing bodies would not have led to such results if political life in general, as well as all social and cultural activity, had not been secularized at the same time. For, according to the viewpoint of the Reformation, the meetings of parliament or any board whatsoever are religious services to the same degree as are convocations of religious associations, and it is true that every year parliament is opened with a devotional service, a relic of a long-lost cultural synthesis. Although resenting this secularizing evolution, one must take into account that it is the consequence not only of factors quite apart from Christianity, but also of a theology which distinguishes between things sacred and profane in a manner not in accordance with the doctrines of the Church of Sweden. While pietism awakened intensive laymen's activity in church organizations everywhere in the North, it simultaneously robbed the layman's workaday ministry of that honour and glory accorded it by the traditions of the Reformation.

### *The Sigtuna Foundation*

In Sweden, as in so many other countries, one consequence of this development was that only with great difficulty did laymen's organizations obtain contact with economic and social problems. They became isolated in a "ghetto" of specifically spiritual and religious interests; life outside the realm of these interests went on without them.

At a very early stage Manfred Björkquist set out to counteract such a development. In 1917 an institution came into being under his aegis which was to become of utmost importance as a means of contact between the various branches of cultural activity. Every year the Sigtuna Foundation welcomes to its schools some five or six hundred young people from different social classes and of varied opinions; its guest home is a haven for intellectuals of heterogeneous viewpoints; in its conferences

representatives of social activity and cultural life, and of the trades and sciences, are constantly confronted with theological research and church endeavour. This centre has created in Sweden bases for the fusion of an everyday ministry and church activity which are not to be found in the other Nordic countries. This is especially true with regard to cultural activity — it has been of immeasurable significance that for a period of nearly forty years the Sigtuna Foundation has maintained a continual Christian cultural debate in Sweden.

### *Lay participation in public worship*

In closing, a few words regarding the problem of the laity's active participation in divine services. The beginnings made after the Reformation are closely connected with the special divine services for lay groups and church associations, and these often suffer the same clerical domination as do so many of these movements as a whole. It is the pastor who talks during the Bible studies ; it is the pastor who reads the Word and who invokes God's blessing at the close of the meeting ; it is the pastor who is the "expert" on the Word of God and prayer. In the public church services the laity's active part consists of joining in the community singing, the reading of the Confession of Faith, and in silent participation in prayers. This is all, beyond sharing in Holy Communion. The church warden takes up the collection, the deacon hangs up the hymn number, the organist leads the singing. But no layman, as in the Church of England, may read the Epistle or the Gospel ; no parish clerk, as in the Church of Denmark, opens the church services with prayer ; since, with the advent of the organ, the choir moved from the chancel to the loft a vast void encircles the pastor at the altar, a symbolic vacuum : the layman is missing. It is also symptomatic that at about the turn of the century the Church of Sweden became the most "desacramentalized" church in the world ; here and there parishes still exist which observe Holy Communion only once a year, at the time of confirmation of the young.

During recent decades a wave of sacramental revival has been surging through Sweden. Clergy and laity have approached

liturgical problems with renewed interest. The breviary, retained by the Reformers but absorbed into other forms of divine service towards the close of the seventeenth century, has been revived and gives laymen access to the altar even without the necessity of a pastor being present. Mention should also be made of the efforts to reintroduce liturgical religious drama, thus opening the way for evangelistic and devotional service by laymen in the sanctuary.

### *New directions*

Great advances must still be made before a satisfactory solution is found to the clergy-laity problem in Sweden. Far too many lay duties still devolve upon the clergy, and when laymen try to serve the church they far too often merely dabble in the functions of the pastor. But potent forces are working for better conditions. I shall summarize here some of the directions which these endeavours are taking.

1. Through seminars and by other means attempts are being made to activate church councils for vital parish work.

2. Through seminars and other study methods pastors as well as leading laymen are kept informed regarding various phases of cultural and social activity. There is an ever increasing emphasis on the value of a thorough understanding of the facts, in order that studies may not bog down in expressions of opinion but actually reach the core of the problems in question.

3. Parallel with group activity, the so-called "open" work is being given an ever wider importance. This involves inviting the cooperation and advice of every possible person in the parish or diocese, regardless of his attitude towards church group activities, even regardless of whether he is "pious" or not; in other words, following the example of a pre-pietistic culture.

4. New opportunities are being sought for full- or part-time employment of laymen, who, whether they have a thorough theological education or not, have good academic qualifications which enable them to serve the parish or diocese in youth movements, study circles and the like.

5. The conference activity at the Sigtuna Foundation has been reflected in the dioceses where quite a number of lesser institutes for conferences of this type have come into existence. Specialized conferences study border problems between theology and literature, theology and medicine, theology and social science, theology and law, etc. Exhaustive research has been planned in border fields neglected by specialized sciences.

6. Liturgics are being studied from the point of view of reviving laymen's active service at the altar.

7. In some places tentative experiments are being made in relying more systematically than hitherto upon laymen for certain phases of church work. Of special importance is the subdividing of larger parishes into districts in which laymen undertake the responsibility for supplementing the pastor's cure of souls through visiting the sick, etc. The vast area covered by parishes in the big cities, where lack of pastors as well as of churches is catastrophic, makes laymen's help to pastors essential. If the present experiments prove effective, it will shortly lead to their use on a larger scale.



# **The Place of the Laity in the Eastern Orthodox Church**

NICOLAS ZERNOV

The Church of Christ is primarily a Eucharistic community and therefore the position of the laity in its life depends on the part assigned to them in the celebration of the Divine Mysteries.

Eastern and Western Christians differ considerably in their interpretation of the Sacraments, and the role played by the Orthodox laity in the administration of them is unlike both the Roman and the Protestant usage. Any Western visitor to the Eastern Orthodox service is bound to be surprised and even lost at first in the unusual atmosphere of Eastern worship. He will probably be puzzled by the high screen which separates one end of the church from the rest of the building, by the place occupied by the altar (called the Throne by the Orthodox), which is concealed behind the screen, and above all by the behaviour of the clergy and laity. Instead of one man conducting the service either from the altar or from the pulpit, as is the common practice among Western Christians, he will witness a liturgical action in which both clerics and laity actively participate. The most vocal and elaborate part belongs to the laity, while the clergy remain silent and even invisible on many occasions behind the screen.

The contrast between Eastern and Western rituals indicates a fundamental distinction existing among Christians in their approach to the Church and in the assignment to their members of the different roles in the life of the Christian community.

## *Clergy and laity in the West*

Western theology and ritual have been shaped to a great extent by the Latin language. Its genius is in its precision, brevity, and its clear logical definition. Better than any other tongue, it conveys the essential part of every idea and presents

it in a convincing and easily remembered form. This gift, however, as all other human gifts, has its limitations. The Latin language can lead its users to overlook the more complex and less rational elements of human experience; the definitions expressed in it are apt to be simplified and incapable of covering all shades of meaning; the outlines can at times be unnecessarily sharp. Latin is the language of lawyers and logicians and it carries their specific mentality into theology and worship when it is so used.

The structure of the Roman Mass is derived from a combination of the Jewish rite and the Latin grammar; consequently the idea of sacrifice is stressed at the expense of other elements. In it the altar is the centre of the divine drama, and before it the priest is elevated to the position of sole performer, the laity being relegated to the status of onlookers. The Roman Mass is so focused on the altar that it appears that only the celebrants possess the full rights of churchmanship. The Roman priest always stands apart from and above the laity. He is the teacher, leader, and the seat of authority and instruction to his congregation. In recent years the Roman Church has inaugurated an important campaign for the recovery of a more responsible and fuller participation of the laity in worship. The outcome of this should benefit not only the Latin community but also the rest of the Universal Church. Its very necessity indicates that Western Christians, since their separation from the East, have lost the balance in the relation between clergy and laity, and that the interpretation of their roles has become one sided. The Reformers were aware of this weakness, and they tried to remedy it by bringing the clergy nearer to the level of the laity. They did it by stripping the altars of their sacred character, by discarding the traditional vestments, and by the introduction of the vernacular in the administration of the Sacraments. As a result of this the emphasis on sacrifice was replaced by the emphasis on remembrance and communion, and the distance between clergy and laity was considerably lessened. Nevertheless the character of the distinction between them was not fundamentally changed.

The Protestant ministers as the inspired scholars and interpreters of Holy Writ retained and even increased their authority

over the laity. They continued to be solely responsible for the conduct of the services, while the part of the laity remained that of obedient followers of their pastors, listening to the prayers recited by the latter and watching their actions in the administration of the Sacraments. The inability of the Christian West to revise this dependence of the laity on their clergy led some of the more radical Protestants to abolish the clerical order altogether and to entrust both the conducting of the services and the government of the Church to the laity alone.

### *The Orthodox Eucharist*

When we turn from the West to the East we enter a world of entirely different customs and convictions. The particular structure of the Orthodox Eucharist is conceived as a divine drama which introduces its participants to the events of the Incarnation ; the whole life of Jesus Christ, starting with His nativity and baptism, passing through His preaching and healing ministry, and reaching its culmination in the Last Supper, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension, and Pentecost, is re-enacted. The celebration of the Communion takes place both behind and in front of the screen, which represents a dividing line between the heavenly and earthly spheres, the Eucharist itself being a drama which unites them. The priest in his gorgeous vestments represents the Saviour of the world, and his actions are symbolic of the different stages in the life of the Incarnate Lord. Yet the drama itself is performed not by the priest alone, but by the whole gathered Church, for the congregation, by identifying itself with the teaching, suffering, death and resurrection of the Redeemer, is purified, regenerated and united with the community of the saints who form the living Body of Christ.

If the Western Church bears the marks of its Latin origin, the Eastern Christians are the pupils of Greece, and their worship follows the lines of Greek drama which played such an important part in the religious experience of the Near Eastern world.

It might appear that an even deeper gulf exists between the figure of the Orthodox priest and the rest of the worshippers

than is the case in the Western confessions. The celebrant is separated by the screen from the laity, and the strong sense of "holy" which permeates Orthodox worship elevates him to a realm of his own, inaccessible to the rest; yet this exalted position of the officiating clergy does not take from the lay people their fully responsible share in the actualization of the Divine Presence. The Orthodox priest neither sacrifices the Mass, nor conducts the service for the laity. He takes part in the corporate action in which the deacons, cantors, readers and worshippers have their indispensable parts. The Eastern Eucharist cannot be celebrated by the laity alone, but neither can it be celebrated by the priest alone. Its centre is not only at the altar, as in the Roman Church, nor in the congregation, as in Protestantism, but evenly distributed throughout the whole Church. The participation of the priest in the celebration of the Sacraments is indispensable, not because he has the power to offer the sacrifice, but because his presence assures the link between the local congregation and the Universal Church; yet the service is not conducted by him, but by the whole community of which he is only one member. When the solemn moment of the invocation of the Holy Ghost comes, and the assembled priests assisted by the deacons ask the Holy Spirit to descend upon the worshippers and upon the gifts brought by them, their prayers are joined by the supplications of all the members of the Church, who also ask for the same grace, and who are the co-celebrants with their clergy of the Divine Mysteries.

### *Chrismated Christians*

The laity of the Orthodox Church are called Chrismated Christians, for after baptism each one is anointed and sealed with the Holy Chrism. As Chrismated Christians they are all entitled to participate in the sacramental actions of the Church. They are also authorized by the same lay ordination to teach the Faith, to preach the Gospel, and to serve the Church as members of the Ecclesiastical Councils, either local or general.

A layman is different from, though not inferior to, the clergy. He is an adult Christian who has his responsible and



distinct part in worship, the administration of the Sacraments, and the government of the Church.

Once in Greece I saw a group of women who came to a church to conduct their own service. They brought their candles and incense, and chanted the service by themselves. It was not a sacramental action, and therefore the presence of a priest was unnecessary. They behaved in the House of God with deep reverence, but also with a sense of Christian freedom. They had the right to conduct the service of the Church as members of the lay order. In Serbia I often heard a layman preach at the Eucharist, if he was better qualified for teaching than the priest.

The Eastern Patriarchs, writing to the Pope in 1848, explained that in the Orthodox East the whole body of believers is the guardian of the Faith, and that this function is not reserved to the hierarchy alone as in the Latin Church.

Such is the part of the laity in the Orthodox Church, and it explains the fact that a large proportion of the leading theologians of the Eastern churches are laymen, and that the worship is conducted in the language understood by the people. Contrary to the case of many Protestant churches, the change of parish priest can never alter the structure of the Eastern service, and nothing of importance can be done in the Orthodox Church without the approval of its laity.

The Russian Student Christian Movement outside Russia can also serve as a good example of Eastern teaching about the laity. For several decades it has been a vigorous body fully conscious of its organic link with the Orthodox Church, but its leadership has remained in the hands of laymen and laywomen. They were able to speak in the name of Eastern Orthodoxy, explain its position to Western Christians, and to bring into the fold of their community many of those young Russians who were outside it. The idea that a layman has only an inadequate knowledge of his religion, and therefore needs the constant guidance and help of the ordained ministry, is quite alien to the Eastern mentality. Clericalism is unknown among the Orthodox nations, and probably one of the reasons for this has been the absence of any special liturgical language in their worship. Books read by the clergy have always been equally

available to the laity, while in the West only specially trained men who were Latin scholars had access to the Bible and to the treasury of Christian spirituality.

*Learning from one another*

The Church of Christ is composed of many national and confessional groups, and each of them has its own achievements and limitations. It is time for all Christians to take each other seriously and to be ready to learn from all interpretations of Christianity <sup>1</sup>.

The restatement of the place of the laity in the life of the Church is one of the important problems of today, and Christians are more likely to find its right solution if they share with one another their traditional practices, and seek together the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help them to achieve much needed unity and mutual understanding.

<sup>1</sup> For further reading on this subject, see N. ZERNOV, *The Church of the Eastern Christians*, SPCK, London, 1954.

# Laymen in the Church and in the World

## A Catholic View

RAMON SUGRANYES DE FRANCH

It is difficult to describe the layman and the functions which properly belong to him otherwise than by exclusion. The laity is a state of life, that of the "faithful", of the true Christian who is not a member of the clergy.

In the Church, the priesthood exercises a ministry for which there can be no substitute, the ministry of sanctifying grace. The priest "administers" the Sacraments, by which grace is constantly renewed in the heart of the Church, like sap which nourishes and develops the Mystical Body of Christ — one of the most beautiful names for the Church. But the Divine Founder has given to this Church a hierarchical structure, from which the priesthood derives a second ministry: that of truth, which it exercises through its teaching, through what is known as the magisterium. And here the laity can be defined as the Church which is taught, as distinguished from the teaching Church.

It should not be assumed, however, that the participation of the layman in the Church has a marginal or subordinate character; the layman is not a second-class Christian. Without the *laos*, the body of the faithful, there could be no Church. His Holiness Pius XII emphasized this strongly in his address to the College of Cardinals on February 20, 1946: "Laymen must have a much sharper awareness, not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church, that is, the community of the faithful on earth, under the leadership of a common head, the Pope, and of the Bishops in communion with him."

Although his functions differ from those of the priest or of those in religious orders, the layman is a full member of the Church and is equally called to a holy life. It was again Pius XII who, in an address before the Belgian Christian Work-

ers' Movement on September 11, 1949, declared that "as for the inner growth of faith and the spiritual life, purity of heart, love of God and likeness to the divine, which are the works of grace in the secret places of the soul, every man, whoever he may be, whatever his condition, priest or layman, from the humblest to the most highly placed, enjoys without distinction the same rights and privileges".

### *The apostolate of the laity*

It is not, therefore, in the realm of sanctification that the distinction can be made between the clergy and the laity. It is to be found rather in their functions. For laymen have a truly Christian and ecclesiastical role to play. All Christian activity consists of sending forth into the world one more ray of divine charity. And the layman's part in this Christian activity is his apostolate to which each is committed by virtue of his baptism and the nature of confirmation.

The role of the layman, conceived in this way, is twofold. It is played, on the one hand, on the spiritual plane, in the work of the Church. On the other hand, the layman, as a Christian, has his own task to perform on the temporal plane.

First, in the spiritual realm, the apostolate of the laity is something more than a substitute destined to remedy the shortage of priests; it is nothing less than the use by the Holy Spirit in the extension of the Kingdom of God of the natural and spiritual gifts bestowed on those whom the Lord calls to live as laymen. And here also their function will be twofold: first, to lead men towards the way of truth and love of Christ, and towards the Church; second, to defend and promote those spiritual values which enlighten the temporal order and upon which it depends.

In fulfilling the first of these functions, the layman acts fully in the direction of the work of eternal salvation and in close collaboration with the priesthood. In the second, he turns towards things temporal, but he does so as a member of the Church and under her direction. He concerns himself with the temporal, in the same way as does the Church herself, either because there is some question which involves both realms (the



family, education, etc.) or in order to safeguard the principles of Christian morality. His action still has a spiritual and ecclesiastical character ; when it touches things which belong to the temporal order — social, economic, political or cultural — it does so only from the point of view of the spiritual values which are involved and which govern this order. It focuses on things spiritual in the temporal order, those things on which it rests and with which it is permeated : the Christian spirit, Christian principles, the speculative and practical truths which are like a “theological firmament” (Jacques Maritain). In other words, this action does not concern itself with the temporal as such. Here are two functions proper to the Church and which could be fulfilled by her priesthood, but in which she enlists the collaboration of laymen. To sum up, this is Catholic Action, in the technical sense of that term, and all those forms of laymen’s work which resemble it, always dependent upon, and under the direction of, the hierarchy.

### *Within the temporal order*

But there is a third way in which the layman, as a Christian, can exert an influence on contemporary society : by working within the temporal order itself, whether it be in the cultural, professional or governmental sphere, or in the family, in short, within all human relationships and groupings. The temporal is distinct from the spiritual. It is nevertheless not separate from it : “The Kingship of Christ is universal, but it rules *directly* only on the level of spiritual things, of the Church, which is His Kingdom ; this Kingship rules over temporal things (cultural, political, social, etc.) only *indirectly*, that is, through Christians, especially laymen, in whose hearts Christ has established His Kingdom” (P. Jean de la Croix Kaelin). Consequently, the specific mission of laymen is to strive to create in the world better conditions of everyday life, to establish an order which is more and more Christian, which will forever remain, as it is now, distinct from the Church, which will never be absorbed by her, but which will be penetrated, illuminated and corrected by the spirit of the Gospel. The second function which we ascribed to the Christian laity was that of defending

and promoting the spiritual values which enlighten the temporal order ; this third function of which we are now speaking is so to live that Christian principles and the spirit of the Gospel may shine forth in the human institutions and structures of this temporal order.

To do this the layman must penetrate the very depths of the world, must find his way to its heart, and must love it, without, however, allowing himself to be overcome or corrupted by it. It is only thus that he will become the leaven in the loaf, the light which shines in the darkness. Although involved in the world, the Christian remains always a member of the Church ; but he acts on his own responsibility, in a realm which is properly his own. This responsibility is nevertheless commensurate with the liberty which has been accorded him. Even if his action has been approved and encouraged by the hierarchy, it can never commit the Church, and the Church, for its part, will never assume direct responsibility for it. Even a priest who engages in activities of this kind — in political or social life, in journalism, in university teaching — hardly does so in his priestly capacity, but acts as a layman would in similar circumstances.

In these areas the time comes, as it has to each one of us in our profession, in civic life, in the family or during our studies, when we must take, according to our own conscience, a grave decision on which our own future life or that of our fellows depends. But if these decisions are weighed and accepted by Christians who have been renewed by grace to the depths of their being, they will reflect the light of the Gospel in the human order. And the Church, without in any sense providing us with a ready-made solution to every problem of this world, will always be there, present within us, guiding us like a mother, sometimes from afar, through her magisterium.

### *The "style" of laity and clergy*

The layman will fulfil all these functions, whether in the Church or in the world, in a manner which is proper to him. Just as there is one sphere of action which belongs to the clergy — priests and members of religious orders — and another

which belongs to the laity, so each has a different "style". The style of the layman is that of one who is "inserted" in contemporary society, a style which is not distinct from that of the world, and which ought not to be. It is the style of his profession, of his family life, of his fellow citizens, and, if I may venture to say so, the normal style of the things of this world.

Surely the only transcendent goal of human life is sanctification, our own and that of as many other souls as possible. But, in general, there are two roads which can lead to this sanctification. One is that of renunciation of the world, that which is taught in the Gospels, the road taken by those souls who follow the religious vocation. The other is that of "presence" in the world, that of laymen. St. Paul has well advised us to "use" the world while not "abusing" it, that is to say, that the spirit of renunciation, the decision not to cling to the things of this world, is essential for Christians, that the blessedness of the poor in spirit is always offered to disciples of Christ. But the method of practising this precept remains totally different for clergy and laymen. And I would even say that the acceptance of the external forms of the style of life in each century is an integral part of the apostolate of the laity. To mingle the two styles leads to unfortunate results, and may even do irreparable harm to the effectiveness of the witness which, as Christian laymen, we have pledged ourselves to bear.

### *Contemplation and action*

The action of the layman often appears to be very simple: it consists only of this witness to a twofold loyalty to the laws of God and to the style of the world. And the Sovereign Pontiff, in his address to the World Congress for the Apostolate of the Laity in 1951, stressed the value of this silent witness of the isolated layman: of the mother of a family in her home, of the doctor who recognizes all the ethical demands of his profession (these are the two examples cited by the Holy Father). Nevertheless, in many instances the layman's dual "belonging" — to God and to the world, Christian and

citizen in a single being — is the source of awful difficulties and excruciating anguish. Take the two examples given by the Holy Father. Or consider the lawyer who is offered a case which is of dubious moral character but which, from a professional point of view, would be very remunerative. We have only to recall our own personal experiences in order to judge how perilous is the situation of the individual layman alone in the world.

The remedy for these difficulties — and security in the face of such dangers — is of two kinds. The first and principle one is to be found within ourselves, in our personal religious life. At the end of these reflections on the *action* of the laity, we are compelled to conclude that no action will have any value or effect if it is not sustained by an inner life of *contemplation*. If we are to act more effectively, we must resist the activism of our time. If we are to be something more than sounding brass echoing in the void, we must learn, like St. John, to rest our head on the breast of the Master and be nourished by His divine friendship.

The other remedy for the dangers of the lay estate — and here we return to the realm of action and even of organization! — lies in the pooling of our efforts, our problems and our experience. Alone, the individual can have little effect on the structure of society. From this fact arises the primary importance of Catholic Action groups formed among people of the same milieu, and specifically for us, as students and men of the university profession, intellectual workers, the value — both in training and in witness — of groups such as those which are united in Pax Romana.



## **Towards a New Strategy in Asia**

### **The Layman as the Spearhead of the Christian Enterprise**

RAJAJIAH D. PAUL

It cannot be said that in India and other countries of East Asia there are what may be called laymen's movements, in the technical sense in which this term is used in some countries of Europe and in America. But the churches in the East are just beginning to understand that, in the new and changing situation in which they find themselves, the laity can no longer be kept in the background. They are coming to realize that "only by the witness of a spiritually intelligent and active laity can the Church meet the modern world in its actual perplexities and life situations". It is gradually being comprehended that the laity are not there to be used, if at all, to supplement or relieve an over-burdened and under-staffed ordained ministry, but that in the Christian effort to establish the rule of God in the world, laymen in their secular callings form the most important, and can be the most effective, agency to be employed.

It is now widely recognized that in the present situation the message of the Gospel can be most effectively spread by the unobtrusive spiritual activity and imperceptible religious influence exercised by Christian laymen in their daily life and work, rather than by paid preachers and elaborate evangelistic organizations. In the light of this, much thinking is being done in all Asian churches on the vocation, function and responsibility of laymen, in order that they may be used more effectively in the Church's strategy.

However, the laymen themselves have not yet realized that under present conditions they must assume complete responsibility for carrying on the mission of the Church in Asia. The average Christian layman in a secular occupation in India, and perhaps also in other Eastern countries, has not yet recognized how important a position he occupies. Moreover, he is becoming

more and more absorbed in the political, economic and social systems of his country. It is becoming increasingly difficult for him, because he is a Christian, to hold his own in the brisk competition in the professions; all his energies have to be bent towards getting ahead. He has no time or inclination to think of the great opportunities which his secular calling gives him to Christianize the system and to witness to the truth of the Christian Gospel. The nominal Christian is handicapped by his name. The real Christian is actually shunned and persecuted because he does not "conform".

Under such circumstances it becomes all the more necessary for the Church to give laymen practical help in facing their problems and the spiritual nurture they need if they are to resist the temptation to conform to the world. The Church must train its clergy to become more competent than they are at present to help the layman in his deepest need, and not merely to preach to him.

Many churches in this part of the world have not yet revised their traditional methods of work to meet the new situation. Most of them still think that, if they make their clergy Bachelors of Divinity and Licentiates in Theology, they have done all that is necessary to train men as ministers of the Church. The idea still persists that, if the clergy hold Sunday and week-day services, dispense the Sacraments, conduct marriages and funerals, their work is done. Churches still aim to do their evangelistic work by employing a body of poorly equipped and inadequately paid full-time workers. They have not yet fully realized that every one of the thousands of Christian laymen earning their livelihood in various ways, and the thousands of Christian housewives who preside over nominally Christian homes can and must be used to spread the Gospel, not by preaching it but by testifying to it through the moral and spiritual power of their lives.

### *"Ministry of the laity"*

The churches are anxious that the laity be helped to perform their "ministry" — but only within the Church. They have not yet planned for the "ministry of the laity" outside

the Church in the secular callings. They still need to learn, what Evanston so emphatically asserted, that "all Christians must become ministers of Christ's saving purpose and messengers of the hope revealed in Him", and that "in daily living and work the laity are not mere fragments of the Church who are scattered about the world but are the Church's representatives" — Christ's own ambassadors — "no matter where they are. It is they who manifest in word and action the Lordship of Christ over that world which claims so much of their time, energy and labour. This is the ministry of the laity."

The provisions in the constitution of the Church of South India are typical of the current attitude to the question of the ministry of the laity. That constitution devotes a full chapter to the ministry of the laity, which follows two chapters on the ordained ministry of the Church. The chapter on the laity begins thus :

To the whole Church and to *every* member of it belongs the duty and privilege of spreading the good news of the Kingdom of God and the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. The Church of South India therefore welcomes and will as far as possible provide for the exercise by lay persons both men and women of such gifts of prophecy, evangelization, teaching, healing and administration as God bestows on them. In particular the laity are called upon to exercise important functions in the Church as members of its governing bodies, both local and central, and of its disciplinary courts.

It goes on to say :

This ministry of the laity may be performed by men and women who, in response to God's call, devote their whole time to it and for whose support the Church must therefore in general make provision. These include both Indian and foreign workers.

While recognizing the important part which the laity must play in the work of the Church, the constitution still manifests a certain confusion of thought. The first sentence refers to the duty of every Christian to spread the Good News of the Kingdom of God. The succeeding sentences speak of the performance of this duty, not by every Christian, but by those

who are called to exercise their manifold gifts (ranging from prophecy to administrative ability) within the framework of the church organization. The second paragraph further narrows the scope of the ministry of the laity to full-time work in the Church which can be done by unordained men. The chapter completely leaves out laymen who are not in the full-time service of the Church or who do not serve the Church in a voluntary capacity in their leisure time, that is, laymen in secular occupations.

### *New steps in India*

This is typical of the current clerical attitude, in India at least, because other churches which are framing their constitutions are adopting this chapter without any modification. It is quite obvious that some Christian lay men and women must enter the full-time paid service of the Church. There are essential functions to be performed in the Church by unordained persons. Many more laymen must help the Church in a voluntary capacity by performing other important functions, not only as members of councils, committees and courts, as sidesmen, stewards and lay readers, but also as preachers, part-time teachers, elders in charge of village congregations where there is no pastor, and so on. The Church of South India has started a scheme for training laymen who earn their living as farmers, minor officials, teachers in government or quasi-government schools, village shopkeepers and the like, to do effective and much needed pastoral work in villages. The best of them are eventually to become honorary (ordained) presbyters, able to take full pastoral charge of congregations while continuing to earn their living in their own occupations.

A large body of educated laymen has been selected, and when necessary given training, to become lay preachers. A new type of honorary but ordained deacon is also being evolved — spiritually-minded laymen at all social and intellectual levels who will serve the Church in various ways and assist the pastor, while continuing to practise their secular professions.



*"Ministry" in secular occupations*

All this is very good and very much needed in the conditions under which the Church in India lives. But what has been left out is that very large body of lay people who work full time in the secular world and who have no time, inclination or intellectual competence to help in the administration or day-to-day running of the Church and its organizations. These people are the majority. They are in the very heart of the secular world and are open to all its corrupting influences. If they could be helped to use their very occupations as the means by which they serve the Church in her mission to the world, they would then perform the real ministry of the laity — the most effective of all.

It seems to me, therefore, that there must come into the thinking and the constitutions of the churches in India and elsewhere in the East, a third type of lay ministry, that of the layman who exercises his ministry, not under the auspices of the Church or in a manner or place which it provides, but in the discharge of the duties and responsibilities of the secular occupation in which he is engaged. The church authorities may perhaps demur against the use of the word "ministry" in this connection, for in its conventional use the word denotes only "those serving at the altar", "clergymen". This restricted use of the word does not recognize that every real Christian is a minister of God, a representative of the Church and an instrument in God's hands for Christianizing the world. It is this change in thinking and attitude that must come about, first among the church authorities, and then among laymen themselves.

The time has come, especially in the countries of the East, to emphasize the essential unity of the laity and the clergy as ministers of God and together making up the *laos*, the people of God. The view of the laity as a non-essential portion of the Church which exists merely to enable the clergy to exercise their ministry, or at best so that some of the good ones among them may be used for reading lessons in church, for teaching Sunday school, or as secretaries of committees and members of synods, must all be changed. For their part, the laity must rid

themselves of the pernicious idea that their Christianity involves no further responsibilities than living "goody-goody", socially respectable lives, committing no overt sin, and providing no occasion for scandal, and that their relation to the Church need only be one of benevolent passivity, nominal adherence and conventional submission to her regulations.

### *Evangelism from within*

All active, organized evangelistic activity is coming to be frowned upon by the powers that be. Veiled, if not open, opposition to what are called the proselytizing activities of missions and churches is growing. The modern secular state in the Eastern world does not believe — or at least pretends not to believe — that it is possible for people to offer others their religion as an act of love and without selfish motives, and that there can be a religious experience which compels men to seek to share that experience with others.

It is fast becoming clear that the only way in which the lives of these Eastern nations can be Christianized — if they are to be Christianized at all, and if that is what the Church is trying to do — is through a process of leavening, of fermentation from within, a process which has already begun and which has now become sufficiently evident to cause alarm. If the social, political, economic and administrative systems of these Eastern nations are to be brought under the sway of Christ, if this is what we Christians are after, it can only be done by Christians who have been placed by God within those very systems and who have been called by Him to exercise their Christian ministry as the *laos* in their own secular situations, by intense devotion to their Lord in the power of His redemption. The people of these countries can no longer be preached to in the old way. They can only be reached from within. The whole system must be permeated with Christian ideas and ideals which must be supported by Christian living. The only effective evangelistic method for the future in this part of the world is the promulgation of the Gospel by consecrated Christian laymen in their secular occupations.

## Is the Distinction between Church and Lay Organizations Valid ?

ROBBINS STRONG

This question begs definition and begets questions. As such it can obviously not be answered by a simple yes or no. Someone has said that as Christians we live "already in the not yet". This is true of our organizational life. To the extent that the "not yet" is still to come the distinction is valid, but when the "not yet" is fully "already" then the distinction has no value.

Historically lay organizations have arisen to meet specific needs that should have been, but were not being, met by the churches. Some of these needs were inside the life of the churches and some were in the social structure around the churches, needs which the churches neglected, perhaps due in part to shortcomings in the inner life. Thus in one sense the lay movements are reform movements made necessary because of overlooked emphases in the life of the Church, but reform movements which have not led to the formation of another denomination or church.

When the churches shall have fully become the Church that Christ intended, when it shall be truly One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic, then the lay movements will be no longer needed and will have lost their *raison d'être*. Their present validity lies in reminding the churches of things they have left undone and which they ought to have done, or things they ought to be and have not been. The lay movements are, in a sense, a judgment on the churches, but a judgment that comes from inside and not from outside. For by their very definition lay organizations have meaning only in relationship to churches ; at least those lay movements with which we are here concerned are within the Christian fold. They acknowledge this dependence upon the churches in that they urge their members to be active participants in the life of the churches, turning to them for the

Sacraments and for a definition of Christian teaching. Although at times membership in a lay movement has appeared to be a substitute for church membership, the lay movements have always been clear that they were not, and would not become, a church.

What then are some of the emphases that the lay movements have felt called upon to make, things which the churches were not doing or could not do? Such an enumeration cannot be universally valid either historically or geographically. Geographically, because of the great variety of situations that exist around the world; what is pertinent in one social or ecclesiastical climate may not be in another. Thus to take one lay movement, the YMCA, as an example, one is struck by the infinite variety of patterns that it assumes. One has but to think of the great building hotels in the United States and contrast that with the small Bible study groups in a West African village; and yet both belong to the same lay movement. Historically such an enumeration cannot be universally valid, for what may at one period evoke the attention of a lay movement may later be wholly and satisfactorily taken care of by the churches. When this is so the *raison d'être* of the lay movement in that particular situation no longer exists.

### *Lay responsibility*

Recent years have seen a re-emphasis on the role and function of the laity in the life of the churches. This has been a trans-confessional development finding expression in Protestantism, Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. But the fact that it is a re-emphasis implies that something had become lost. Leaving aside such considerations as the "priesthood of all believers" and the idea that both clergy and laymen together are the *laos*, the people of God, the controlling positions in the life of the churches were predominantly in the hands of the clergy, of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, with laymen given little actual responsibility. Under such circumstances it is only normal and natural that laymen should join together, desiring by themselves to assume responsibility for the active expression of their Christian faith.



It is generally recognized that the coming into being of the World Council of Churches has produced, at least temporarily, a heightened confessionalism and ecclesiasticism. This is perhaps a necessary phase through which the ecumenical movement must go, but when one places this side by side with anticlericalism and suspicion of any hierarchical ecclesiasticism at the grass roots of church life or on the fringes of church life, it points to a continuing need for lay movements. It is precisely at this point that lay movements may render a great service to the ecumenical movement in helping to bring its ideas and impacts out of the ecumenical stratosphere of committee infra-structure into the earth-bound lives of non-theological laymen. Here the lay movements can perform one of their basic purposes, namely, to be "auxiliaries" of the churches. But they can only do this if they maintain their independent lay control, untarred, in the eyes of non-church people, by the brush of clerical control.

### *Cutting edges*

Churches are always faced with a tension between Gospel and tradition, between creative and daring response to the demands of Christ and the necessity of preserving certain traditional forms which have developed through a long history and often in relationship to particular social and national milieux. Churches are not and cannot be expendable in the same sense that a lay movement can. Here again lay movements can and should take risks in new situations when churches must by their very nature be more conservative. Lay movements can be more mobile, moving rapidly to "spy out the land", charting the road for an effective "occupation" by the main body. Lay movements must, however, beware that they remain movements and do not become organizations, themselves bound by their own traditions, prisoners of their own history and thus ineffectual. They must be constantly prepared to "lose their lives", even institutionally, for Christ's sake.

Thus it was that the needs of young workers for recreation, both social and physical, for decent lodgings, gave rise to the YMCA. Young laymen saw this as a necessary derivative of the

Gospel and in the name of Christ set their hands to the task. That their vision was valid is borne out by the fact that most churches now regard such activities as a valid part of their mission. The YWCA, facing some of the same problems, brought to them an additional insight concerning the responsibility of Christian women. That the struggle still continues concerning the responsibilities and status of women in the churches is an indication of the advance work done by the YWCA as a lay movement. The needs of students, a special group of society not being adequately reached by the churches, gave rise to the WSCF. Initiated largely by people within the YMCA, it is an indication that the weight of its own tradition was bearing upon the YMCA and that it could not respond adequately to this new horizon within its own organizational framework. Recent developments in church-sponsored student groups are once again an indication that here too a lay movement has done a valuable piece of pioneering. If the lay movements are to maintain their validity, they must be constantly alert to new adventures of pioneering action.

### *Inter-confessional*

From their beginnings the lay movements have crossed church boundaries in ways that church organizations could not. Their members, while remaining rooted in different churches, have found possibilities of a Christian fellowship and action that is not only trans-denominational but trans-confessional. The contributions of the lay movements as forerunners or training grounds for the ecumenical movement are too well known to need repeating here. Nor does the coming into existence of the World Council of Churches obviate the activity of the lay movements in this sphere. The World Council is a council of churches, the market place of confrontation, an agent of cooperation. It recognizes this, and is based on that painful division of the Body of Christ which unfortunately characterizes the Christian world today. It hopes for and seeks indirectly that oneness for which Christ Himself prayed. Thus it lives "already in the not yet", but until the "not yet" has fully come the lay movements have an obligation to provide a testing ground, and

an experience of experiments in united Christian life and action. This is at times easier on a lay basis. The lay movements need to be constantly aware that the very real measure of Christian fellowship and unity that they know falls short of the full unity that will only be found when the Body of Christ will have become wholly one. But they do provide a common meeting ground where Christians of different traditions can pray and work together in united loyalty to Jesus Christ.

Precisely because they are lay movements, and because their members do not come as official representatives of their respective churches, but as individuals, precisely because of this the lay movements have been able to include in their working fellowship persons coming from churches that do not officially take part in the World Council of Churches. Perhaps here too it may be permitted to the lay movements to be once again a cutting edge for "the cause of unity among Christians of whatever confession they may be — Protestant, Orthodox or Roman Catholic ; and to witness for Christ on and across the frontiers by which Christendom is still so tragically divided" <sup>1</sup>. This possibility alone gives present validity to the distinction between lay and church organizations.

### *No sharp distinction*

What has been written thus far implies that there is a clear distinction between lay and church organizations ; or to put it another way, that one can accurately define a lay organization or a church organization. This is by no means certain, for actually no clear line of demarcation between the two can be drawn. The spectrum of possibilities is infinitely rich.

Within the YMCA the term "laymen's movement" is used in at least two major senses. Increasingly in many parts of the world it is coming to mean a movement whose control and policy are in the hands of non-professionals. That is, the layman is seen in contra-distinction to the employed secretary. This is to use the term layman in the same sense as one would speak of a layman in medicine, science or military affairs. Taken in

<sup>1</sup> YMCA Centennial Declaration.

this sense the layman in the YMCA may be a priest or pastor, and often is. Here the use of the term is clear, but it is not the sense in which it is used in this article.

The other major sense in which it is used is that of "lay" in relationship to "church". Thus used it is a movement of laymen in reference to their standing in the Church, that is, non-clergymen. Yet here again a too careful definition breaks down, for the lay movements include in their membership persons who are not laymen, either because (a) they are not yet members of a particular church, or (b) because they are clergymen in their own church.

Perhaps it is better not to try to define a lay movement in terms of its membership, that is, laymen, but to use "lay" or "laymen" in an adjectival sense as modifying the noun movement or organization. In this sense a lay movement is one which is within the Church Universal but not under the control or direction of any particular church or churches. Its direction and policy are determined by individual Christians (lay or clergy) acting in their personal capacity rather than as official representatives of a particular ecclesiastical structure. The concomitant of this is that membership is open to all regardless of their particular ecclesiastical affiliation. It should be pointed out that such a concept arises most easily in a pluralistic society with the democratic tradition of voluntary organizations, and corresponds to the "free church" concept of a gathered church with individuals covenanting together. It immediately runs into difficulty in a country where one church is predominant or there is a different concept of the nature of the Church.

Thus one should not be surprised at finding within the YMCA quite different concepts of what the YMCA as a lay movement is, and a resulting tension within the World's Alliance as to whether Associations more closely related to individual churches are in fact true YMCAs.

But if it is difficult to define a lay organization, the same can be said for a church organization. This raises the difficult question of the nature of the Church. One can ask seriously whether a church is itself a church organization if one takes as determinant the factor of clerical control. For in many churches (is it a majority ? ) the direction and control is in the hands



of laymen. In this sense one can say that the Church itself is a lay organization. There is not space, nor is this writer capable of dealing with the whole series of organizations such as student groups, young people groups, theological schools, mission societies, *Innere Missionen*, women's groups, church councils and federations or even the World Council of Churches, in all the fascinating complexity of their structure and control. Sufficient to say that they run the whole gamut from lay to church organization partaking partly of one and partly of another. This is a fluid front without clearly marked out distinctions which are easily validated.

Nor is it perhaps wise to try to differentiate too sharply between the two. Each needs the other, and in that larger sense which is yet to come, each is of the other and in the other. Each in its own way works, prays and waits for that unity of life and worship for which our Lord prayed "that they all may be one... as Thou Father art in me... that the world may believe".

## Is the Distinction between Church and Lay Organizations Valid?

PHILIP POTTER

This question has been answered from time to time by the lay organizations themselves. Sir Frank Willis has summed up the position of the oldest of these recognized organizations, the YMCA, thus :

Nothing could be more certain than that YMCA leaders have always resisted any suggestion that the Association should become a Church, and have always regarded loyalty to Church and to Confession as of greater importance than loyalty to the YMCA <sup>1</sup>.

The 1950 Nyborg Strand meeting of the YMCA World's Committee asserted :

The Young Men's Christian Association is a Christian lay organization : while rooted in the Christian Church and seeing in Jesus Christ the pathway and destiny of mankind, it is lay in character, initiative, responsibility and administration, and is independent of ecclesiastical administrative organs.

The other lay organizations, like the YWCA and WSCF, also resist the suggestion of being regarded as churches, and claim to be "independent of ecclesiastical and administrative organs". Church organizations, on the other hand, form an organic part of the confessional, liturgical and administrative life of their particular churches. It is as such that this distinction is held to be valid. But the issue can by no means be so simply stated.

### *"Handmaids of the Church"*

The lay movements came into being because of the evident needs of young people which were not being met by the church-

<sup>1</sup> *History of the World's Alliance of YMCAs*, Editor, C.P. Shedd, p. 689.

ches, which could only be met interdenominationally, and with a mobility and daring that the churches seemed incapable of evoking. The purpose of these movements was definitely evangelistic in the widest and deepest sense — bringing the whole Gospel to bear on the whole life of man and in the whole world. They discovered a fellowship in Christ and with each other which was more real and enriching than they could experience in their own churches. They had the freedom and the initiative to serve in areas which the churches failed or seemed powerless to reach. In this manifold experience of evangelism, fellowship and service they recovered for the Church something of its constitutive nature of the threefold *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*. Moreover, in responding to the call to witness, these movements have from their origins been aware of a new unity in Christ, which challenged and transcended their confessional or denominational loyalties, while forcing their members to work and pray within their own churches for the unity and renewal of the Church. No-one can deny that in these movements God has been working powerfully through His Spirit, and that their activities cannot be divorced from the life and mission of the Church. They have, therefore, been fully justified in claiming to be “handmaids of the Church”, “arms of the Church”, “parts of the Church”, “auxiliaries of the Church”, and such like.

### *Developments within the churches*

The churches have recognized, sometimes grudgingly, the considerable contribution of these lay movements, as evidenced by the fact that they have incorporated many of the activities of the lay movements into their own life. There has been a marked increase in church youth work which has tended to absorb the potential leadership and membership of YMCA and YWCA groups. With the vast extension of university education the churches are undertaking student work in a big way. Women's and men's church organizations are developing rapidly, thus entering into the field occupied by the YWCA and YMCA. There is a growing realization of the crucial place of the laity as the people of God, called to be the Church in the world.

The churches are now taking an active part in social and political witness in the world, following the lead hitherto given by the lay movements. This church-centredness has recently been focused in the establishment of the World Council of Churches in 1948, and of the National Councils of Churches, or Christian Councils, before and since.

### *Reactions*

These developments have been accompanied by two reactions. The lay movements, on the one hand, have been making more explicit their relation to, and responsibility for, the Church. For example, in the proposed text of the constitution to be submitted for adoption at the coming WSCF General Committee, it is intended to expand the object, "To lead students to accept the Christian faith in God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, according to the scriptures, and to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ", to include the phrase, "within the life and calling of the Church". The YMCA and YWCA made similar statements in their important legislative meetings last year. At the same time, the lay movements have become rather restive about what they regard as the encroachment by the churches into their accustomed fields of activity.

The churches, on the other hand, have adopted a critical and impatient attitude towards the lay movements. They state that the lay movements have not appeared to maintain vigorously their evangelistic purpose ; that they have become institutionalized, and lost something of their power of pioneering mobility ; that because of the noncommittal position of so many of those who participate in their activities, their specifically Christian character is not always evident. Indeed, in some quarters it is being questioned whether the lay movements have any further validity now that the churches have awakened to their responsibilities, and the World Council of Churches and its various agencies have been launched. To these criticisms and speculations, the lay movements, not unjustly, retort that in spite of having the peculiar blessings of the Word and Sacraments, and the ministry, the churches and their organizations are failing tragically to reach a predominantly pagan world with any recognizable effectiveness.



*Interdependence*

We have therefore arrived at a very crucial point in our existence as churches and lay movements. The churches have acknowledged that the lay movements have fulfilled functions which they had not fulfilled because of their inadequate comprehension of their tasks, and could not fulfil because of their sinful divisions. The lay movements in fact manifested and still manifest some of the marks of the Church. The lay movements, on their part, have always acknowledged that, while administratively independent of the churches, they draw their spiritual resources of Word and Sacrament and their leadership from the churches, and aim at integrating their members into the more permanent fellowship of the churches. In other words, both the lay movements and the divided churches display together elements which belong to the one Universal Church as understood in the New Testament. It is this fact which has disposed the lay movements to question the validity of the distinction often made between them and the more specifically church organizations. Administrative or institutional control does not constitute the decisive factor when we are concerned to demonstrate "the true nature of the Church in its oneness, universality, and its apostolic and prophetic witness in the world" (Dr. Visser 't Hooft). For these reasons, the churches and the lay organizations must together reconsider the implications of this obvious interdependence which has at best been the result of the working of the Holy Spirit through human obedience.

Moreover, the very existence of church organizations — designed for the laity as against the clergy, for men as against women and *vice versa*, and for youth as against older church members — is a sign of the stratification and weakness within the life of the several churches. They have been created precisely because the Church as a whole has not fully incorporated them into its life or recognized their capacity to witness on its behalf. It is a well-known fact that while these church organizations are ecclesiastically within the discipline of the churches, they often assume or are forced to assume an independent character not dissimilar to that of the lay movements. The tensions

which exist between these varied church organizations and the leadership and remaining membership of the churches are not unlike those which exist between the churches and the lay organizations. They, too, develop vested interests and tend to fragment the Church. Thus the churches can claim no monopoly of wholeness either in their life or witness. And even in the activities they have lately taken on, the churches admit that they cannot fulfil their task according to their God-given mandate without the lay movements. In this connection, it is significant that the denominational student movements are seeking to be actively associated with national SCMs. As a current WSCF document puts it: "God creates in the SCM a kind of fellowship which has no parallel in the divided churches as parochially organized."

### *Leadership*

And yet, the churches' criticisms of the lay movements cannot be lightly ignored. The lay organizations possess a peculiarity which is at once a blessing and a bane. They do have a Trinitarian or Christological basis, which is not so much a creed to be adhered to as an anchor and a compass in their way towards men. While they depend for the maintenance of the basis on their leadership, they insist on including all who desire to participate in their activities. That is their classic method of evangelism. In so doing they place a tremendous burden on this leadership. Of course, since the leaders are often drawn from different churches, they are perhaps more likely to be open to the varied grace of God in the Spirit and may gain resources which might not be available if they all belonged to one confession or denomination. Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that this alert and ecumenically open leadership is always available. In reality, this nucleus of Christian leadership is often absent. Dr. Emil Brunner pointed out this danger in his notable address to the Nybord Strand World's YMCA Committee when he counselled his hearers to "focus our attention on the building up of Christian leadership and of Christian nuclei in every Association". He went on to say:

We must lay a new emphasis upon selecting and creating a truly Christian leadership... Christian faith grows out of

the Word of God. Therefore bringing the heart of the Gospel into the heart of our young leaders is the most essential part of all our program for the education of leadership.

The second point is the creation of a Christian nucleus in every Association. By this I mean a group of people, deeply grounded in the Bible and in prayer, who are drawn to one another by their faith and who try to help one another to grow in their spiritual life by sharing with one another their experiences, their concerns, their doubts, their victories, and their defeats.

What Dr. Brunner did not add is that the creation and training of a truly Christian leadership, as he conceives it, is impossible without the active aid of the churches. In fact, it has been observed that where there is not a constant traffic between the lay movements and the churches, such nuclei of dedicated Christians are not often discernible. Furthermore, the lay movements, and especially the YMCA and YWCA, have developed large institutions and programs which absorb the energies of their leaders administratively to such an extent that their primary purpose of witness and pastoral care remains unmet. They become less and less able to pioneer into new areas of service, and when they attempt to do so they are weighted down with their institutionalized approaches. It even happens that some leaders within lay movements begin to assume that the patterns they have tried with some success in one area of the world can be exported willy-nilly to another, provided they find the resources and personnel with which to do so. It is this kind of discrepancy between our official claims of interdependence and our practical independence of each other which seems to confirm the distinctions often made between church and lay organizations. The lay movements know full well in their own history that they can only be instruments of God's renewing Spirit as they expose themselves to the total fellowship of the Spirit. Having taught that lesson in the past to the churches, they need to learn it themselves afresh in a more urgent way today.

### *A useful bridge*

Is there a way forward through this apparent impasse in which we find ourselves? The existence of the World Council

of Churches and National Councils of Churches provides a useful bridge between the churches and the lay organizations. It is true that the WCC is the creation of the churches themselves and as such is subject to some ecclesiastical control. Nevertheless, it is not a church or super-church, and has no authority over its constituent member churches other than that which they freely recognize in obedience to the truth. It thus partakes of the characteristics of both church and lay organizations. Indeed, its very structure reflects its indebtedness to the lay movements and its determination to serve the churches and their organizations. Already, through the facilities it provides, new insights are being gained and new forces of thought and action are being released into the churches and in the world. The reports of the Amsterdam and Evanston Assemblies are monumental witnesses to this new movement of the Spirit. Here are data which have resulted from the fruitful interchange of accumulated wisdom and activity of the lay movements and the churches, and which in their new orientation can be employed for the renewal of both the churches and the lay movements. On the youth field, the Amsterdam, Oslo and Travancore world youth conferences are signs of this divinely inspired desire to be the Church in as full a sense as human sin and perverseness will allow.

The WCC and National Councils of Churches need the active support of the potentially footloose and non-ecclesiastical lay movements if they themselves are not to be frustrated and rendered sterile by the churches, especially in view of a hardening world confessionalism. Similarly, the lay movements need the WCC and NCCs to interpret their concerns and challenges to the churches. The links here suggested at international, national and local levels are not intended to be either official or administrative. What is envisaged is a dynamic, self-effacing, concrete fellowship within these ecumenical organizations, which have no other aim than the wholeness of the Church for the salvation of mankind. Only in this way will the distinctions now employed between church and lay organizations be seen to lose their ultimate validity.



# THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

## Chinese Christians: New Prospects, New Unity

TING KUANG-HSUN

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Full of Thanksgiving to God, Chinese Christians share the joy of their fellow citizens at having won peace and entered on the task of building a prosperous nation. At the same time they feel that the Church, in her ministry to the people and through her life of love, worship and witness, should build herself to keep pace with the country's fast-moving progress.

Our Nanking Union Theological Seminary endeavours to answer the call by preparing candidates for the ministry and for other Christian leadership. It offers training that is recognized by practically all the non-Roman churches in the country. The course for university graduates lasts three years; for those with a lower academic standing, four or five years. The enrolment this spring, including those attending refresher courses, was about 150.

### *The rural churches*

A new and very encouraging feature of the composition of our student body is the number who now come from rural areas. That is as it should be, since a large proportion of Chinese Christians live in the countryside. But it was not the case in the past. Then there was great lack of educated Christians in the villages, and there were very few rural candidates for the ministry. Here I must stop and explain the background of the new trend, so meaningful for the Church and its future.

During a recent three-week rural tour in Chekiang province, I came to understand this new trend better. There I visited eleven parishes, attended retreats and conferences with colleagues in several places, and confirmed about 700 people between fifteen and eighty-one years of age. The Diocese of Chekiang today has over seventy churches under the full-time care of clergymen.

I found that all these churches had gained from the restoration of peace, from the ending of cursed inflation, the land reform, the movement towards cooperative farming and the introduction of advanced methods of agriculture, which have brought the peasants a better livelihood and have aroused in them an interest in cultural life. This I saw in the little town of Kwanhaiwei. The membership of St. John's Church in that town has increased by between twenty and sixty annually in recent years. It has some 200 members, sixty other members who have been baptized but not yet confirmed, and fifty or sixty new converts under instruction.

Out of 128 members of the St. John's congregation who were working in agriculture last autumn, sixty-six were in mutual-aid teams and forty-two in farming cooperatives. They had taken part in building dykes and other projects for irrigation and water control. Their general standard of living had risen steadily in the past few years, and last autumn's harvest set new highs for both rice and cotton.

### *A church beautified*

The church found itself benefitting by these blessings. The people's offerings broke all previous records. The building was enlarged to accommodate additional worshippers; its walls were repainted and new vestments were made for the choir. The parishioners made a flower garden on a piece of formerly derelict land behind the church, with stone seats to make it a pleasant resting place.

While I cannot say that the services in all rural churches I visited were always orderly and beautiful, I did see that the congregations were big, the spirit was warm, the singing hearty and our clergy was generally held in high esteem in their parishes.

It is known to all how, in the past, misery drove men and women in despair to their knees. Now we can see that spirituality does not thrive on misery. On the contrary, all alleviation of suffering draws the same men and women, in thankfulness, to the brightness of God's presence.

Another important new fact is that our members no longer think of their church as belonging to the foreign missionary. Nor do they think the church belongs to the clergy only. They see her now as the Church of God, belonging to them all. This outlook makes a tremendous difference. The minister of the rural town of Tatuan told me that the annual meeting of his parishioners no longer consists of a handful of people listening passively to reports, and submissively assenting to proposals for election. More people than ever are taking part in the everyday work of the parish, and all want to put their views forward. So at the annual meetings small groups are formed, which give everyone a chance to have a say on problems of church life. The conclusions that come out of such discussions, the vicar told me, are far more representative of the opinions and interests of the whole congregation than those reached at meetings of the old type.

This being the situation in Christian religious life in China, it is easy to understand why more young men in the rural churches now think of choosing the ministry when they come to decide on their vocation. It is, of course, unavoidable that the educational standards of some applicants for admission to the seminary should still be low. But I am sure that in the next few years this difficulty will be overcome and ways will be found to give adequate help to all those who need it.

### *Seminary life and studies*

For students at the Nanking Union Theological Seminary, life is simple and full. There are few rules, but plenty of mutual love and respect within the community. Nanking itself is fast becoming a leading centre of learning and culture. Thus, while the seminary provides an admirable environment for retreat and study, the seminarists also find opportunities in the city for wider academic, artistic and cultural activity.

As for the curriculum, our visitors from abroad have expressed a certain surprise that Chinese Christians have not availed themselves of the changed circumstances to give their faith a "new look". We think this would be wrong. We have denounced and repudiated unscrupulous efforts to place the Church, the Bible or our theological teaching at the service of colonialism, racism, aggression or anything which contradicts the true nature of Christian faith. But in taking that position we were not aiming at revision of Divine Truth. We saw our stand as part of the movement of Christians to take the Bible, and the historic faith, more seriously than ever.

Our new-won freedom is freedom indeed, because in it the truth we regard as essential for man's salvation is not sacrificed or diluted. On the contrary, with untruth exposed for what it is, truth presents itself in greater purity and fulness. It calls us to love it more dearly, and bear witness to it more faithfully. Thus, we do not feel apologetic about the fact that our basic curriculum corresponds quite closely to that of traditional theological education.

### *After graduation*

Our students, on graduation, find many and varied opportunities awaiting them. Most of the recent graduates have taken up direct pastoral work. Others have been called to offer their talents in the field of Christian literature, work among children and youth, religious art and drama, sacred music, theological teaching and the sale of Bibles. One of them even assisted in producing a musical movie for Christmas.

Christian writing seems to interest our students more and more. Many contribute to their denominational periodicals. Our own seminary publishes the *Nanking Union Theological Review*, which is in the main a theological forum for the faculty; *Fellowship With One Another*, which is the students' own magazine, and an *Alumni Bulletin* for past graduates. Our professors devote much time to preparing courses and textbooks. It is our aim to do some theoretical work on subjects of special relevance for the Church in present-day China. Bishop T. K. Shen, formerly of Shensi, has done intensive study on certain liturgical problems. Dr. Andrew C. Y. Cheng is chairman of a committee which is undertaking the translation into Chinese of some of the classical Christian literature.

Throughout the Chinese Church, there is greater intellectual vigour, and a new emphasis on overcoming the divorce between theology and devotion, and between worship and life. This, with a heightened sensitivity to the "manifold brilliance" of the Bible message, is definitely bringing a healthy influence to bear on the theological and spiritual condition of the Church.

Finally, I should like to say something about the word "Union" in the name of the seminary. Our seminary is a venture in cooperation. On the board of directors and the teaching faculty, and in the student body, there are members of the Presbyterian, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Congregational, Pentecostal, Apostolic Faith, Seventh-Day Adventist and other churches.

The special characteristics and needs of each denomination are given due respect, both in the preparation of the curriculum and



in the planning of worship. Take for example, the situation of my own church, the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui (Anglican). Besides the ordinary courses in the seminary, Anglican students are provided with special ones to meet their particular requirements. Joint services are held in the main chapel for the whole seminary, but there is also a special Anglican chapel where Holy Communion is celebrated on Sundays and on Holy Days in accordance with our Prayer Book. Special services are also held there during Advent and Lent.

### *Venture in unity*

We feel that our seminary can be a meeting place for all the churches taking part in it and for others too, because we have received one faith and serve the same Lord, and it is His will that we should be one. We have some differences ; we do not ignore them. We serve in mutual respect and esteem, entering as deeply as our humility can take us into the riches that are in Christ. This is something new. Compared with the spirit of competition and even hostility that existed between some of the church bodies in the past, we see it as nothing short of an act of God Himself.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA TRAVEL DIARY

T. V. PHILIP

### *The homeland of Kyaw Than*

When I landed in Rangoon, capital of Burma, the stronghold of Himayana Buddhism (the other main sect is Mahayana), I was met at the airport by Dr. Hla Bu, Chairman of the Burmese SCM and Dean of the Faculty of Arts in the University of Rangoon, and Dr. Hla Thwin, the Honorary Senior Secretary of the SCM and a professor of psychology in the university. They took me to the home of Rev. Addison Eastman, chaplain of Judson Chapel and director of the new student centre, where I was to live for the next two weeks.

I had a full schedule in Burma — meetings with various student groups, a consultation with SCM and church leaders, a meeting of the university Christian faculty group, a committee of the new student Christian centre, and so on. At the SCM consultation we discussed, among other things, the question of Burmese participation in the forthcoming meeting of the WSCF General Committee, and in the Asian SCM executives' consultation and the conference for theological students to be held soon after in Bangkok, and also the General Committee theme, "Jesus Christ the Reconciler". Throughout my journey I met with various groups which were studying this theme, trying to discover what it meant in their own lives, in the life of their SCMs, of their nations and of the world. During the discussions in Rangoon I overheard Dr. Hla Thwin and his wife (Ma Aye Thwin, well-known to many Federation members as a former WSCF Executive Committee member) arguing over the question: how can we be said to be reconciled to God as long as there are unreconciled tensions among men in which we participate? After the consultation Mr. Eastman remarked that we had made a good beginning and that we had material for many days of meditation and reflection.

In Burma there are eleven colleges and one university with about 10,000 students. SCM work is concentrated mainly in Rangoon, Mandalay and Moulmein. I did not have time to visit Mandalay, but was told that next to Rangoon it has the largest student body. I spent three days in Moulmein. There are only about twenty-five Christian students there, but they have an active SCM group. A brief look at these various university centres — and the government is planning to open others in the near future — makes one realize

the magnitude of the task facing the SCM there, one of which it is fully aware.

In Rangoon, the members of the SCM meet every day in Judson chapel on the university campus for worship before they go to classes. How often we forget that the SCM is a worshipping community! While in Rangoon I met two students who were being prepared for baptism, and they told me that they had come to know Christ through their friends in the SCM. A new development in the life of the Burmese SCM is the opening near the university of a student Christian centre which serves both Christians and non-Christians.

I visited Kyaw Than's family twice while I was in Rangoon and enjoyed the hospitality which has been extended to many other Federation visitors before me. Kyaw Than's sisters were complaining that when he is home he sometimes speaks French, which is completely "Greek" to them, and that he is even urging them to learn it too!

The golden pagoda in the centre of Rangoon, the numerous other pagodas scattered throughout the city, and the monks in their saffron robes going with their bowls from door to door begging remind everyone that Burma is a Buddhist country. It is no wonder that Kyaw Than so often speaks of holy living, austerity and renunciation. The sixth Buddhist Council was going on when I was in Burma. On the outskirts of Rangoon, under the shadow of a new "world peace pagoda", the government had built many new buildings for the monks and a huge assembly hall which looks like a cave for the council meetings. It is to remind the people of the first Buddhist Council which was held in a cave of northern India nearly 2,500 years ago. Underlying all this is the faith that Buddhism alone is the hope of the world, and that it alone can save the world from doom. This reminded me of the message of the Christian Gospel and of our task to preach "Jesus Christ the Reconciler".

### *Monument of Oriental culture*

My next stop was at Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. Before the second world war, India had to import large quantities of rice from this country, so it is known to Indians, especially those who, like myself, are from the south, as the "rice bowl of Asia", and it is indeed the greatest rice producing country of the continent. In Bangkok I was told that the word "Thailand" means "land of the free", and it is true that this country has never been under foreign

rule. The art and architecture of the ancient temples and monuments, and the famous hospitality, customs and manners of the Thai people are all wonderful examples of the culture of the Orient.

Christian work among students is carried on by the student Christian centre of the Church of Christ in Thailand, the Baptist student Christian centre, and the YMCA and YWCA. Most of the students are Buddhists and there are only one hundred Christians in the university. My time in Thailand was taken up with meeting different student groups, a consultation with church leaders and student workers on SCM matters, and a seaside camp at which there were about forty-five students, eighteen of them non-Christians. What a great opportunity for Christian witness! The theme of the camp was again "Jesus Christ the Reconciler". I also had to make some arrangements at the Wattana Wittaya Academy for the meeting of the Asian SCM executives and the theological students' conference which were to take place there some time later.

### *A fascinating country and a charming people*

I stopped off for a few days for a consultation with SCM leaders in Singapore, on my way from Thailand to Indonesia, where I was to spend about ten weeks. There in Djakarta, Ihromi, then the SCM General Secretary, and Sabam Siagian, then Associate General Secretary, Winburn Thomas, formerly a WSCF secretary, and other members of the SCM committee helped plan my program. I visited almost all the scattered university centres — Djakarta, Jogjakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, Makassar, Bogor, Medan and Siantar. I had consultations with church and SCM leaders, university professors, members of the Christian political party and senior members of the SCM, and attended student camps and conferences at various places.

At the annual conference of the SCM at Bandung, I watched with interest as the students discussed their Christian task in the university. Women students took a leading part in the discussion, which is unusual in a Muslim country. One young woman law student from Djakarta was particularly eloquent. Sabam and Ihromi were excellent chairmen and the democratic spirit of the delegates was amazing. There would seem to be a bright future for the churches and for the young republic itself when these students leave the university and assume responsibility for the life of their church and nation.

Indonesia is changing rapidly in all spheres of life. As in other Asian countries, nationalism is very strong. President Sukarno,



during his address in the palace grounds on Republic Day repeated several times, *Indonesia Republic Merdeka* (Victory to the Indonesian republic)! Students are very active in politics and in the life of the nation. The government is conscious of the part which students will play in building the country and gives them all possible assistance. But nevertheless they have many problems. The student population has increased tremendously since the war, and more buildings, student hostels, staff and other facilities are desperately needed. But what really amazed me was the courage and determination with which students and government are facing these problems.

A good number of non-Christian students participate in the activities of the SCM. There is less religious fanaticism among Indonesian students than in some other Asian countries. They are willing to listen to new truth: the field is ripe but the labourers are few. The main task of the SCM is to be an evangelizing community on the university campus.

In various places I was able to meet with senior friends of the SCM, those who had been members during their college and university days. Dr. Leimena, at that time Minister of Health in the government, and Dr. Tambunan, then Vice-President of the Indonesian parliament, are both closely associated with the WSCF. At Makassar I met a group of senior friends who told me they had been at the WSCF conference in Java in 1933, when Dr. Visser 't Hooft was General Secretary. They still have the list of participants and other conference papers as precious treasures and cherish memories of their days there. I met one woman who told me that she had dedicated herself to full-time Christian work as the result of attending one of the conference sessions led by Dr. Visser 't Hooft. Others are now employed in various jobs, trying to witness to the truth of the Gospel through their daily work.

In Djakarta Lem Khiem Jang, Associate General Secretary of the SCM, and I spent one evening with Tine Franz in her home. She told us of her experiences in the SCM and the Federation and what they had meant in her life. We ended our conversation with prayer, thanking God for the Federation and bringing before Him the great numbers of students and SCMs in all parts of the world.

With some of the members of the SCM from the University of Medan, a city in the northwest of Sumatra, Sabam and I went about 150 miles to Tobu Lake, for a week-end conference. Two Muslim students accompanied us, at their own request. Tobu Lake is one of the beauty spots of Southeast Asia; Indonesians are very proud of it and quite rightly sing its praises. It has been chosen

for the conference of the International Missionary Council and World Council of Churches to be held in 1957. On my way back to Medan I stopped for three days at Siantar where Keith Bridston, formerly a WSCF secretary, is teaching in Nommensen University, which belongs to the Batak Church, the largest in Indonesia. This church resembles in many ways my own church in Travancore, India. It is fast developing into an indigenous church, rooted in the culture and soil of the people. I still remember the hearty and beautiful singing in the church, where I talked to a gathering of about 1,000 young people.

Indonesia is famous for its folk dances, music and Oriental art, and I saw examples of these at various places during my tour. Those who were at Bangkok for the theological students' conference will remember the dances and songs of the Indonesian delegates, especially of Ukur, who is now General Secretary of the SCM. And the colourful sarongs of the Indonesian women are unusually lovely. I left Djakarta feeling that I had been in a fascinating country and among a charming people.

### *A cosmopolitan city*

I stopped again at Singapore, but this time for about two weeks. It is still a British colony and the struggle for freedom is going on. Singapore is a cosmopolitan city of peoples from all parts of the world — Malaysians, Indians, Chinese, English, Australians, Europeans and Americans.

It was university term time and I was able to meet with students as well as to consult with SCM leaders and attend the General Committee of the Malayan SCM to plan their future work. Peter Lim, General Secretary of the Malayan SCM, and I visited the Federation of Malay and met with students of the teachers' training college at Kottabaru and the technical college at Kulalampur. I also attended a retreat for students in the new student Christian centre whose director is Fred Karat, loaned to the Malayan SCM by the SCM of India.

### *Hongkong*

Geoffrey Huang and Harry Brunger were at the Hongkong airport to meet me, and took me to the Chinese YMCA at Kowloon, where I stayed for the next ten days. Hongkong, a British colony, is about fifty square miles in area. It is a beautiful city, surrounded on all sides by the sea. At night, from the Kowloon side, it looks

like a floating ship. But amidst this natural beauty are the bitter poverty and suffering of the refugees. Much is being done to help them, and to find them homes and employment. There are nine colleges for refugee students, financed mostly by funds from outside. These refugee colleges are post-secondary schools. SCM work is being carried on in almost all these refugee colleges. Hongkong University, which is sponsored by the colonial government, is modelled entirely on the British universities and has an aristocratic atmosphere. Most of its students are from well-to-do families.

As usual I met with SCM groups in almost all the institutions, and had informal consultations with university teachers and church leaders. Many missionaries from the West who were sent away from the Chinese mainland have started work in Hongkong, so all kinds of Christian denominations are represented there.

### *The Philippines*

The Philippines is the country in Asia which has the largest number of Christians. Out of a total population of twenty-one million, seventeen million are Christians, with Roman Catholics in the majority. Innumerable Christian churches are scattered throughout the Philippines, as temples are in India, Burma or Thailand. There are several Protestant groups, though they are small in number. The Philippine Independent Church, the second largest in the country, is a group which broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and is now in communion with the Protestant Episcopal Church.

The plane in which I flew to Manila was also carrying Cardinal Gracias of Bombay who was going there to preside over the Asian conference of the laity (I do not remember its exact name). It was about eight in the evening when we reached Manila, and it seemed as if the whole city, including all the Roman Catholic bishops, was at the airport to receive the cardinal. From the midst of the crowd I heard a voice calling, "T. V." It was Natty Baranda, chairman of the Student Work Committee of the Philippine Federation of Christian Churches, who with Cordelia Gobuyan, Director of the Federation's Youth Department, and Hester Jason, Youth Secretary of the United Church in the Philippines, was waiting for me. They told me that they recognized me by my smile. What an idea of a Federation secretary!

I visited some of the university centres in Iloilo, Davao City, Cagayan de-Oro and Dumaguete City, with John White, an American missionary and a good friend of Parker Rossman. He had attended

the Monmouth consultation on missionary strategy in 1954, and so knew most of the Federation leaders. In Silliman University, where the campus life impressed me very much, I met a group of students who are studying regularly the missionary obligation of the Church in Asia. It is no wonder that this university has sent out people like Jorge Quismundo, who is working with the church in Indonesia, and Jose Estoye, who is doing church work in Thailand.

I spent Christmas at Los Banos and preached in the church there on Christmas day. At the agricultural college there are students from almost all parts of Southeast Asia, and they are served by a student Christian centre.

Manila is a very busy city, with many colleges and universities in and around it. There are about 20,000 students in Far Eastern University alone. Two student Christian centres run by the churches are already in operation in Manila, and they are considering starting others. At Manila we had a seminar for student workers on five evenings, where we discussed the WSCF, the SCM, and how to help the local SCM groups to carry on their work more effectively. Philip Potter, on his way to Australia, stopped at Manila for a few days, and brought me news from Geneva and also from Kyaw Than, whom he had met in Formosa.

Although the Philippines SCM urged me to stay longer, I had to hurry back to Bangkok for the preparation of the meeting of the Asian SCM executives and the theological students' conference. This time, while passing through Thailand, I went to Chiangmai in the north, and had the honour of being the guest speaker at the commencement service of the theological seminary of the Church of Christ in Thailand, where John Hamlin, well known to many Federation members, is teaching theology.

#### *Meeting of Asian SCM executives*

SCM leaders from the different countries of Asia came to Bangkok for consultation and planning for future work. We spent ten days listening to God and to each other and discussing all aspects of the life of the WSCF and our national Movements, and how best these Movements can be strengthened to fulfil the tremendous task of Christian witness in the universities. Priorities were drawn up for each Movement and among the various Movements, and these will have to be carried out in the near future.

#### *"Theology in the Service of Evangelism"*

The SCM consultation was followed immediately by the theological students' conference. During my travels through the various



countries of Southeast Asia I took the opportunity to visit theological seminaries, meeting with the students and staff members, and discussing with them the plans for this conference. It was held in conjunction with a conference of theological educators sponsored by the World Council of Churches, the International Missionary Council and the Nanking Theological Seminary Board of Founders. About seventy teachers and forty students from various countries in Southeast Asia, including Australia, were present at Bangkok for these two conferences, which were held simultaneously with some common sessions. The main theme of the conference was "Theology in the Service of Evangelism". Dr. Visser 't Hooft and other leaders of the ecumenical movement and of the churches in Asia were present at Bangkok, and they, together with Keith Bridston, Harry Daniel and Philip Potter provided leadership for the students' conference.

This was the first conference of its kind to be held in Asia. It gave the students an opportunity to study and discuss together the meaning of theology and its task in the fulfilling of the evangelistic responsibility of the Church. The key word which was repeated over and over again, disliked by some seniors but accepted by the students, was "relevancy".

## BOOK REVIEWS

THE PATTERN OF ATONEMENT, by H. A. Hodges. SCM Press, London.  
103 pp. 8s. 6d.

This is "a revised version of a course of lectures" which Professor Hodges gave to theological students at Lincoln. As a restatement of "the economy of our salvation" through the death of our Lord, in a language at once fresh and lucid, it is no doubt "of interest to a wider public". It is a philosopher's approach to a theological subject, and he has surely achieved his aim to take the reader out of the "long-standing soteriological ice-age" and its tyranny of the classical theories of atonement, and to present "the work of Christ as peace-maker and restorer", and then to come back to the theories "in a context in which they can be understood". To this task the author has brought his understanding of, and reflections on, the Bible, the liturgies and personal Christian experience.

The lectures begin with an exposition of the effects of sin in human life. Sin breaks personal relationships, corrupts man's nature, frustrates human functions, makes men slaves of Satan and builds up psychological resistance against salvation. And he goes on to show how, through the Cross, fellowship is renewed, human nature recreated, human functions restored, man delivered from Satan and resistance to saving faith broken down. These expositions are the most constructive part of the book. From the point of view of university teachers and students, it may be mentioned that the corruption through sin and the salvation through grace of the intellectual life of man find due emphasis in the lectures.

If man was created to know the truth and enjoy the real, his falling away must consist in believing a lie and embracing fantasies. Such is the nature of the fall... 'I am (or I can be) independent like God.' The acceptance of this lie brings immediate ruin over the whole field of thought. That field loses its true centre and is refocussed upon a false centre, upon the liar himself. Everything is thereby twisted out of due proportion and perspective... False beliefs and systems of belief become established as an inseparable part of our cultural inheritance, false aims and perverted institutions propagate themselves through history (pp. 19, 20).

It is the task of the Christian community in historical institutions like the university not only to diagnose this lie but also to present Christ's Cross as the source of true wisdom. Says Hodges: "In the list of the seven gifts of the Spirit, which Western Christendom has

associated with Confirmation, it is noteworthy that four out of the seven are intellectual gifts and in St. Paul's great list in I Corinthians 12, wisdom and knowledge stand at the head of them all."

Professor Hodges' description of sin as "captivity to Satan" echoes the idea of the superhuman demonic powers influencing man and history. He says: "Every human fantasy which has become fixed in a formula and focussed in an image and is capable of obsessing the mind, every false purpose dwelt upon as a longing, crystallized as a habit and so ruling the will, provides a dwelling place into which powers more deeply sunk in falsehood and sin than we, can enter and dwell" (p. 22). This approach makes the human problem more than human in its character. And therefore false gods cannot be dislodged from their elevated places by man himself; only the work of Him who has battled with the "Prince of this world" without giving him a "foothold", can do it. Hodges says: "Our incorporation into the victor is our liberation from the vanquished" (p. 38).

The author's criticisms of theories of "expiation, satisfaction, substitution" cannot be considered too original; he covers rather familiar ground. But the two final chapters on "justification by faith" are a worthwhile contribution to an ecumenical theology. The controversies on the doctrine of justification are at the very heart of the Protestant-Catholic division of the Christian Church. The report of the Faith and Order Commission of the Evanston General Assembly accepted the doctrine of justification by faith too easily as the basis of an ecumenical understanding of the nature of the Church, its unity and disunity; and it provoked the Orthodox churches to make a dissenting statement. It has thus underlined the fact that that doctrine still remains an ecumenical problem and cannot be considered as an ecumenical solution. One is, therefore, rather pleased with the attempt of the author of this book to examine the Protestant-Catholic controversy over the doctrine and to restate it from an ecumenical standpoint. I quote here two statements to show the direction in which Hodges moves. "The proper integration of this volcanic experience into the traditional account of the problem of the spiritual life could only be a gain to all concerned, and would complete the process of clearing up the present confusion of teaching with regard to justification" (p. 82). "It has long seemed to me, and I think history confirms it, that the Reformation principle of the sovereign grace of God is set forth and embodied in Catholic teaching and practice, not less truly and a good deal less abstractly, than in the Reformation doctrines themselves" (p. 101). Of course it is possible for Protestants to criticize Hodges as having failed to transcend the narrowly "catholic" tradition in his restatement.

And the significance of the doctrine for current ecclesiological discussions is not brought out by the author. But the author's is a worthy attempt to clarify the crucial issues of the ecumenical debate on this doctrine of justification by faith and will no doubt help in the evolution of an ecumenical theology and (what is more important) the development of the wholeness of spiritual life.

This book deserves to be read and studied in groups of Christian students and teachers.

M. M. THOMAS.

INTRODUCING HINDUISM, by Malcolm Pitt. Friendship Press, New York. 60 pp. 60 cents.

"This book is one of a series of Popular Introductions to Living Religions", the other titles being *Introducing Islam* by J. Christy Wilson and *Introducing Buddhism* by K. S. Latourette (in preparation).

Dr. Pitt is a most suitable person to introduce Hinduism to the Western reader. He has an intellectual and (what is more significant) an aesthetic appreciation of traditional Hinduism. He has also an intimate and sympathetic knowledge of the dynamic modern movements that shape Hindu religious thought and practice. This latter is most important, for without it one may be scholarly, but may speak entirely of a dead past, and not of the living religion of the present day. The book has more than mere academic interest, for, says the author: "The real point of reference will be the understanding of the setting in which the Christian movement is seeking to express itself and to communicate the word of God to contemporary India" (p. 1).

The author has given adequate attention to religious symbolism in Hinduism; for whoever is not willing or able to enter into the large field of religious myth and symbol in the Hindu religion cannot hope to understand it. The Westerner, and more especially the Protestant Christian, with his emphasis on the written or spoken word, is at a distinct disadvantage here. A Protestant professor of systematic theology, from a very famous theological seminary in America, while in India told me that he could not appreciate any of the symbolic representation in Hindu art. I was sure he could not hope to understand either the Hindu mind, or to help communicate the Gospel to the Hindu. I remember Paul Tillich once discussing the question whether without entering into the world of myth and symbol of a religion one could hope to understand it; his own answer was in the negative. In fact, he was very critical of the Moffat



translation of the New Testament, because it was done without due appreciation of the mystical and symbolic aspects of Christianity. Dr. Pitt says: "The elaborate symbols used are the documents of religious education for a people not accustomed to the greater abstraction of the written word" (p. 5). This is a narrow definition of the function of symbols in religion; they are certainly much more than "documents of religious education"; they are primarily means of appropriation of, and communion with, the deity. This aspect is no doubt recognized by Dr. Pitt when he deals with the symbol of Natatraja.

The author elucidates in brief compass the "characteristic dogmatic emphases that unite religious thought and practice into a federal union" (p. 12). The chapter on "The Framework" is a masterpiece of writing, if one thinks of the large area that is covered and the amount of material that has to be summarized — the fourfold purpose of life, the threefold ways of spiritual deliverance, the karma and the caste-system, and finally the Vedanta, "the perennial philosophy" of the brahman-atman equation and its implications.

Vedanta is "the metaphysical framework" of the Hindu religion. Renascent neo-Hinduism underlines its centrality for India, and at the same time seeks to redefine it in such a way that it may provide spiritual reinforcement to the new concern for man's individual personality, material development and social progress. In fact, not only the practice but also the philosophies of individualism, socialism and material progress can find their niche within this framework. And nothing irritates the modern Hindu thinkers more than the statement that Vedanta is a world-negating philosophy or that it cannot be a support for the new sense of individual freedom and social equality that seeks expression in the political and economic life of the nation. The modern Hindu leaders are convinced that the Hindu philosophy can give the cultural support for a modern democratic nation state. I have heard a European theologian of renown say that in this matter the modern Hindu philosophers lack intellectual integrity. Even if that be true of some, it is a harsh judgment on a whole generation of thinkers. And this reviewer for one thinks it is a wrong judgment, for Vedanta is a very adaptable framework in which new values, ideas and even gods can be brought without violence to the framework itself — I must add, so long as these values, ideas or gods do not claim final truth or ultimate lordship.

It is precisely at this last mentioned provision that the debate between the Hindu and Christian ideas of catholicity becomes real and acute. The issue comes up every now and then in the discussion

of the meaning of religious freedom, of the right to "propagate" the Christian religion and "convert" Hindus to it. The forces of liberal secularism have helped to emphasize that the basis of religious freedom is not the equality of gods but the equality of men; but since it is indifferent to religious truth, it may not go far enough. This reviewer thinks that the debate about the meaning of catholicity has not been carried to the point where Christians and Hindus at least understand each other's points of view. To say that Hindu catholicity is based on indifference to truth is wrong; on the contrary it is based on Brahman as the only truth, all diversities and differences being illusory or relative. The point is that the Christian idea of truth as ultimately personal revealed once for all in Jesus Christ of Nazareth has an entirely different approach to catholicity. This is by the way.

The book has a "brief chronological outline of Hindu literature, persons and religious development" which is helpful in a systematic and historical study of Hinduism from the Vedic to the modern period. The final chapter indicates the direction which the Church must take to have its life rooted in the cultural soil of India and to communicate the Gospel to the Hindu by word and life. The spirit with which the author approaches the subject is expressed in these sentences:

In these tragic days of the mid-twentieth century, the Christian can approach the Hindu with no sense of superiority. He is too deeply aware of the tragedy of our time and the common predicament in which we are all caught. It is in the sense of discovery of God's plan for man in meeting the tragedy of life that we are brought together to share our resources. It is here that the Christian with confidence proclaims the Gospel.

And he ends the book asking: "Is it too much to believe that with the dynamic of the abandon of commitment to God so characteristic of India, her new ways will find in him the satisfaction of her age-long aspirations?"

I hope this book will be published in cheaper editions outside the United States so that the non-American may benefit.

M. M. THOMAS.

THE REFORMATION OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, by Roland H. Bainton. Hodder and Stoughton, London. 20s.

FOUNDATION OF AMERICAN FREEDOM, by A. Mervyn Davies. Abingdon, New York. \$3.50.

Professor Roland H. Bainton of Yale has become for many Europeans the leading American exponent of the Reformation. In *The*

*Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* we have a popular exposition of the ideas behind the Reformation which can be used with confidence, for it is clearly based upon a lifetime of research in the field, and it has been given form by a scholar who can write. It is a book to be placed in the hands of every intelligent layman and student.

It is not a history of the Reformation, but it is the kind of book which should be read side by side with the history text-book, for it is essentially an exposition of the ideas underlying the Reform rather than a chronological account.

Of course, there will always be places where the conscientious reviewer disagrees with the author. The present reviewer, for example, is not so sure that "restored" is a better word than "re-formed" to apply to the Anabaptist conception of the Church (p. 95), nor that they could so easily have returned to the Pope if Roman Catholicism had improved its morals (p. 97), nor that Calvin's *Institutes* began from the sovereignty of God for any more subtle reason than the fact that the Apostles' Creed (on which Calvin so clearly based his book) begins this way (p. 114). In the same way, when we read the introspective diaries of the Puritans — such as that of Dr. Samuel Ward, the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge during the early years of the seventeenth century — we doubt whether Calvinists were always so sure of their own election (cf. p. 252) or that their religion was never "psychological and self-centred but theological and God-centred" (*ibid.*) Nevertheless, these differences are all fair differences of opinion, and where one disagrees with Professor Bainton one recognizes at the same time that he has been scrupulously honest with the evidence and never consciously misleads his readers.

There is one slight disadvantage caused by his own scholarship. We wish that many of those interesting quotations could have been given references. Doubtless, for many laymen who might read his book footnotes would be a nuisance, but for the student a few notes at the end would be of very great value, although some reparation is made by the inclusion of a useful bibliography. The book also includes twenty-four excellent reproductions of original sixteenth-century prints.

In the last few chapters Professor Bainton tries to estimate the influence of the Reformation in the struggle for religious liberty, and in the political and economic spheres. In this section we are particularly conscious that the author is a historian scrupulously anxious to do justice in estimating the interplay between all the factors — economic, national and geographical no less than the religious — which have produced the history of Western culture.



In A. Mervyn Davies' *Foundation of American Freedom* we do not find a historian who patiently amasses his evidence and then draws out his lesson, but an advocate arguing a brief who has gone to history to find his proofs. The "brief" in this case is Calvinism and American democracy, and it is quite clear that the author regards these two things as more or less identical. For Mr. Davies is an immigrant and a convert, and when immigration and conversion combine with a Celtic temperament, then we have all the constituents for high-powered apostleship.

This illustrates the very serious criticism of this book : Mr. Davies writes as an apostle who is utterly convinced of his cause — and it is a worthy cause with a great deal of truth in it — but in his advocacy he overstates his case and is led into generalizations which cannot always be substantiated by the evidence. It is a book which makes the reviewer tear his hair in exasperation — not because it is untrue in its main thesis, but because it lays itself open to attack so unnecessarily. As a good Calvinist I may maintain that Calvin's system in Geneva restored "to the church its former constitutional government through council and abolishing the usurped monarchical power of the popes" (p. 60), but in these days most of us recognize that elements of both episcopacy and congregationalism are also fairly strong in the New Testament, and an author should not make a statement like that without saying something to justify his conviction. In this context the remark was quite unnecessary. Similarly, although the author says that "much of what can be said about the connection between Calvinism and liberty applies with equal force to Protestantism in general", the examples he cites from Lutheranism all point in the opposite direction, but he completely ignores the contribution of the Lutheran Scandinavian nations in the development of freedom through constitutional monarchy. The reason is obvious : Mr. Davies, in embracing the American republican ideal, now regards constitutional monarchy as simply an unfinished revolution and therefore not to be compared with democracy at its highest (American)... but still !

Mr. Davies has no doubt that in America is the epitome of true democracy and has succeeded in enthroning God in the affairs of social organization : "The real revolution, of which America is only one expression — though no doubt to date the most important — is the overthrow of tyranny and the enthronement of a greater sovereignty in human society" (p. 180 f.), and again : "Even this recital by no means exhausts the list of changes that take place in Western society and its ideas, in order that such a radically new form of society and government as the American Commonwealth could come into being.



But it points up the fact that the revolution which brought about the changes was, and still is, the greatest revolution of all time and, fundamentally, the only genuine revolution" (p. 182). Because of this comforting belief, Mr. Davies is led to "point up" the differences between American democracy and all other democratic states. So he finds an essential difference between America and Britain in the fact that whereas in the latter the ultimate authority is vested in "a sovereign congress, or parliament", in the former the ultimate authority is God; and the proof of this is found in the simple fact that America has a written constitution whereas Britain has not (p. 241-3)!

But more fundamentally than our questions regarding Mr. Davies' political theory we must question his exposition of Calvinism. What is this "Calvinism" to which he (quite rightly) ascribes a good deal of America's greatness? It is clearly not to be identified with Presbyterianism — it is the whole movement which developed from the Swiss Reformers and includes quite as much that is in violent contrast to Calvinism as it owes to Calvin himself. For example, the "covenant" idea, the conception of a "gathered" Church and the separation between Church and state are all concepts of which Mr. Davies makes a good deal, but Calvin shares them with the Anabaptists and Separatists in so far as he has anything of them at all in his system. The Calvinism from which Mr. Davies is writing has some considerable modifications — it would not dream of persecuting (p. 193 f.); it does not seek to become established by the state (p. 196), but seeks the separation of Church and state and liberty for all religions (p. 234); it throws over biblical literalism (p. 195) and holds the supreme authority of private judgment (p. 79 f.); it is so far a debtor to the Renaissance that it finds no dichotomy between reason and revelation (p. 197), and is thoroughly Armenian in respect of predestination (p. 196). In fact, it is so close to the Enlightenment and to 1789 that "when the theological label and specifically Christian context are removed from the political thought of Calvinism, what is left is so nearly the same... that it is hard, if not impossible, to distinguish one from the other or to see the specific new elements that the Enlightenment introduced" (p. 215). The question is whether you can still call this Calvinism.

This would appear as if we are trying to be damning: but that is not so. I believe that Mr. Davies is struggling with a very great theme, and it is important to underline that there are many very good things in his book. His real intention — which he never makes fully explicit — is to record the social and political implications, not of Calvinism, but of the whole movement of Reform which, indeed,

has John Calvin at its centre, but which is far too wide and varied to tie itself simply to his name. He is undoubtedly right to insist again — as many recent historians have insisted over against the political economists — that in the Reformation religion which was centred in the Sovereignty of God in Christ was the primary concern, and that (if one is truly to understand the people of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) social and political events are to be seen in the light of this faith rather than the other way round.

For reasserting this basic fact Mr. Davies deserves praise, and again he insists that because this faith is at the heart of social resistance in the Anglo-Saxon and Dutch democracies, their forms of government have an entirely different quality from those which developed from resistance inspired by the teachings of Rousseau or Marx. Here he is wrestling with a very important theme which needs to be studied at a far deeper level than it has been in the past. But this is due to something far bigger than Calvinism.

The paradox of Calvinism (as Mr. Davies himself has seen) is the fact that it has become the soil for both capitalism and socialism; it explains both the work of a slave-trader like Hawkins and of a liberator like Wilberforce; it has produced the race equality of the Anglo-Saxon nations at their best, and apartheid. If Mr. Davies had dealt frankly with this dichotomy and sought to sift the gold in Calvinism which is at the centre of all that is good in Western democracy, from the dross that produced the present situation in South Africa, the colour-bar of America's south and the slums of Britain's north, then he would have written about a freedom which is far wider than simply that known in the United States. That would have produced a really great book, for the need of today — as a young Japanese pointed out recently — is not only that the Reformers should be praised, but that they should be forgiven.

ROBERT S. PAUL.